SERVICE QUALITY DIMENSIONS OF CATERING SERVICES AND CUSTOMER SATISFACTION IN GOVERNMENT INSTITUTIONS IN NAIROBI, KENYA

BY

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DECLARATION

Declaration by the Candidate

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DEDICATION

I would like to dedicate this thesis to my parents, Daniel Kwetekamar and Mary Lokiruk for their tremendous support, they have provided me with every opportunity in life to succeed and taught me that hard work and a character can take you anywhere. My siblings Boniface, Salim, Irene, Tobias, Maureen, Mercy, Clare and Enock have been there every step of the way. To my loving husband Vincent and children Shirlyton and Sarah for being there in good times and the bad, and being the best friends, anyone could ever ask for and for providing me with unfailing support and continuous encouragement throughout my years of study and through the process of researching and writing this thesis. This accomplishment would not have been possible without each and every one of you. Thank you

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ABSTRACT

In Kenya, the public sector is facing criticism to improve service delivery to enhance customer satisfaction. However, public institutions offering catering services are faced with multiple challenges and immense pressure in provision of quality service delivery which result in elusive achievement of customer satisfaction. Despite this, government institutions strive to put effort to achieve customer satisfaction through service delivery. The study sought to establish the influence of service quality dimensions of catering services and customer satisfaction in selected government institutions in Nairobi, Kenya. The specific objectives were to establish the influence of responsiveness, reliability, empathy, tangibility and assurance dimensions on customer satisfaction in government institutions in Nairobi, Kenya. The study was anchored on Expectancy and Disconfirmation theory and SERVQUAL model. Explanatory and Descriptive research designs was adopted. The target population comprised of 12,000 customers at Kenya School of Government (KSG) and Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD) where a sample size of 387 was selected. Purposive sampling was used to select the two institutions while systematic random sampling selected the participants for the study. Data was analyzed using gap analysis, paired t- test and multiple linear regression. From the finding the regression model attained $R^2= 0.874$ which implies that catering service quality dimensions explained 87.4% of the variation in customer satisfaction. The results further revealed that responsiveness ($\beta=0.303$; t=2.803, p=0.001), reliability ($\beta= - 0.219$; t= -2.129, p=0.004) and empathy ($\beta=0193$; t=2.058, p=.001), had a positive and significant influence on customer satisfaction while tangibility ($\beta=1.167$; t= -1.730, p=0.006) and assurance ($\beta= - 0.327$; t= - 2.264, p=.005), had no significant influence on customer satisfaction. In conclusion it revealed reliability, responsiveness and empathy had influence on customer satisfaction while tangibility and assurance do not significantly influence customer satisfaction. The study recommends to management to adopt three service quality dimensions that positively influenced customer satisfaction and to focus on improving the two other service quality dimensions to enhance customer satisfaction even within the constraints of government operations. It also recommends provision of staff training and development programs based on skills gaps to enhance customer satisfaction. The study also recommends to management to allocate adequate financial resources on modern infrastructure, continuous assessment and adaptation based on feedback to improve service efficiency and to optimize on service quality dimensions and meeting customers' expectations.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

GoK	-	Government of Kenya
KICD	-	Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development
KSG	-	Kenya School of Government
NACOSTI	-	National Commission of Science, Technology and Innovation
SERVQUAL	-	Service Quality
SPSS	-	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
WTO	-	World Trade Organisation

DEFINITION OF OPERATIONAL TERMS

Assurance: Staff experience and professionalism, Staff politeness, Price of service, Effort done by staff for security, Hotel atmosphere (Bahadur et al., (2018)

Catering services: Provision/serving of food and drinks in restaurants and workshop/meeting rooms in selected government institutions (Bahadur et al., (2018)

Customer Satisfaction: Customer satisfaction is referred as how well organisations' products and services meet or surpass customer expectations (Thirumaran, Klimkeit & Tang, 2021).

Empathy: Accessibility, Staff availability, Attention paid by staff, Staff flexibility, Hotel prevision for customer necessities (Bahadur et al., (2018)

Expectation: The customer foreseen quality of service before the service is rendered. (Solution, 2019)

Gap Model: The gap model of service quality is a conceptual model of service quality. It is a framework for measuring inconsistency between perception and expectation of a customer on quality of services provided (Muthukumar & Kumar, 2018).

Hospitality features: Intangible, tangible and operation practices that influence customer satisfaction with services offered (Karamustafa & Ülker, 2020)

Perception: The customer experience on the quality of service after the service is rendered (Cai & Alaedini, 2018).

Quality of products: Perception to which the product or service meets the customer's expectations (Cai & Alaedini, 2018).

Reliability: Timely service delivery, staff able to solve customer problems, right orders service ((Bahadur et al., (2018)).

Responsiveness: Welcoming of customers, Response for requests, giving information offering for service, Speed of service (Ashok, 2013),

Service quality: Provision of catering services to an expected standard measured by assessing the expectation and perception of the customer (Cai & Alaedini, 2018).

SERVQUAL: This is a tool for the measurement service quality using the five specific dimensions of service: tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance and empathy (Markovi & Raspor, 2010).

Tangibility: Attractiveness (external), Internal decorations, Staff appearance& tidiness, modern well-maintained facilities (Ashok, 2013),

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Overview

This chapter presents the background of the study, the statement of the problem, study objectives, research questions, hypothesis, justification, significance, scope, assumption limitation of the study, theoretical framework and conceptual framework.

1.1 Background to the Study

Customer satisfaction is related to the human activity directed at satisfying human wants through the exchange of goods and services and is fundamental element of success of any business. According to Nguyen, (2018), delivering service quality has significant relationship with customer satisfaction and retention and is a yard stick of successful organisation. The ultimate goal of any organisation is to ensure the goods and services offered are of good quality in order to satisfy the customers. Satisfying customers is one of the critical and most difficult undertakings organisations face. The whole argument of ensuring customer satisfaction has changed from early 80's due to changes of needs of customers and challenges of advent of service industry which has created cutthroat competition.

The Vision 2030 development plan aims at transforming Kenya into a newly industrialized, middle-income country providing a high-quality life to all its citizens by the year 2030 (Sierra, 2017). This development plan has earmarked government service to be reformed to ensure that is more citizen-focused and results oriented. This intervention is aimed at transforming the government service from a just government service provider to a customer driven service provider.

In his report on the improvement of management of United Kingdom government service, Nguyen, (2018) argues that poor management of the government institution is due to lack of focusing on customer care. He further noted that for the government sector to offer quality service the government service must focus on the customer by ensuring the clients are certified. He opined that provision of quality service and knowing the wants of a customer's plays an important role of satisfying the clients.

Organisations usually invest on customer care for the purpose of attracting customers with the aim of increasing sales, sustaining business and as a strategy of addressing competition. Customer care provides an opportunity for an organisation to improve its reputation or image which is critical in ensuring customer satisfaction. According to Zhong and Moon (2020) customer care is not confined to service industry only. They further asserted that all businesses should attach importance to the quality service in order to survive the competitive market structure. Quality manufactured products has a long been the approach, which has particularly gained importance after the World War II of ensuring customer satisfaction.

Catering services falls under the service industry which mainly provides services like food, drinks, outside catering among others. Consumers expect the services offered in catering establishment to be of high quality regardless of whether private or government. The private sectors are said to perform well on customer satisfaction as compared to the government sector. Several reasons have been advanced to explain why private sectors perform better as compared to government sector (Wiyan, 2019).

Catering services are offered by both government and private firms. The government catering firms are mostly under the government such as learning institutions. It has been argued by some authors that private firms provide better services as compared to

government institutions. For instance, a study conducted at Kenyatta National Hospital in Kenya established that lack of customer's satisfaction strategies has led to poor service (Fitch, 2019). The study found that there was no deliberate effort to interact with clients in terms of understanding what they want a situation which has led to adverse spreading of negative service offered at the hospital.

According to Kotler and Keller (2016), the rationale behind customer satisfaction is that higher levels of customer satisfaction usually bring about strong customer loyalty behaviour and this is measured through customer recommendations, reduced customer accusation costs, and repeat purchases. They further argue that customer satisfaction is the most common method of gauging the likelihood of customers to stay or defect. There is a close relationship between product/ service quality, profitability and customer satisfaction. There is strong empirical evidence that places customer satisfaction as a key metric for managing customer's loyalty and their behavioural intentions. Armstrong, Almohaimmeed (2017) posited that businesses become competitive when they make customer satisfaction a key element in the strategies that drive them.

Kotler and Keller (2016) posits that in the hospitality industry, customers are extra sensitive to the service and product offered. When they receive a dynamic service and a memorable experience tied to the service on offer, they are most likely to come back as repeat customers because the business has lived up to their service quality related promise. According to Gakuria and Miyonga (2017), government institutions, are generally considered to be customers-averse. However, there is a growing need for government institutions to greatly improve their service and product offering and therefore their customer satisfaction ratings due to the dynamic nature of the hospitality industry and current technological transformations. Private institutions are more likely to pursue customer satisfaction than their counterparts in the government institutions.

They achieve this through offering high quality products or services and constantly measure the needs of customers.

Over the years customer perception of satisfaction in the hospitality industry has changed owing to the fact that customers are more connected than before, use of social media, internet search, online review forums are all working to shift the balance of power in favour of customers Fitch (2019). According to Indonesia Food and Drink report (2020), there are new communication modes like internet that are shaping the hospitality industry and they help the customers in presenting the standards they want and their preferences to hospitality institutions who are forced to listen and meet these preferences.

As the hospitality industry is changing due to new modes of communication and changing customer perception of satisfaction, competition in the industry to satisfy today's customer has increased and this situation is leading hoteliers to change tact from customer acquisition to customer retention and loyalty and this is possible only through effective customer satisfaction (Wiyana, 2019). Measuring customer satisfaction has become a critical element to managers and organizations in hospitality industry. This comes from the perception that since customer satisfaction is a fundamental issue in the hospitality market performance; then it should be measured and employed in the decision making by stakeholders in this industry. Companies gain or lose depending on what percentage of their clients they can keep in the long run. Therefore, success is about customer retention which is dependent on customer satisfaction levels and therefore players in the hospitality industry would benefit if they relate the measures of quality of products and services, they offer with real customer behaviour.

There are various methods that are employed in measuring customer satisfaction. They include SERVQUAL, Post service rating, follow up surveys, in app surveys, mystery shopping, Customer Effort score, documentation analysis, social media monitoring and objective service metrics (Kotler and Keller, 2016). SERVQUAL is the most preferred method of measuring customer satisfaction. SERVQUAL narrows down to subjective service dimensions and asks customers to indicate the extent to which services and products offered meet their expectations. The first dimension is reliability; the extent to which products and services are offered accurately and consistently. The second dimension is assurance and involves the employee's politeness and level of knowledge which helps customers have trust and confidence. The third dimension is tangibles; appearance of products and services, employees and premises. The fourth dimension is empathy; the extent to which employees are caring and offer personalised attention. Last dimension is responsiveness of employees to offer quick services.

The SERVQUAL method of measuring customer satisfaction has been used extensively globally and regionally and in Kenya in measuring customer satisfaction. Minh, Ha, Anh and Matsui (2015) used the SERVQUAL method in determining how service quality affects the satisfaction of Vietnamese hotel customers. Kalulu, Kiconco and Kesande (2015), used the SERVQUAL method to determine the relationships between customer satisfaction as characterised by customer retention, service quality, and work environment in the Ugandan hospitality industry. Tessera, Hussain and Ahmad (2016) used the SERVQUAL method in determining how service quality affects the satisfaction of Ethiopian hotel customers. They found out that the tangibles, empathy, and responsiveness dimensions affect the satisfaction significantly. Here in Kenya, a study by Agyei (2013) employed SERVQUAL method in establishing the relationships

between customer satisfaction as characterised by customer loyalty and service quality in the mobile telecommunication services in Kenya.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Customer satisfaction is the heart of marketing in any industry. The ability to satisfy customers is vital for a company to succeed in this era of cut-throat competition. In the era of service economy, how to meet customers' expectations and to measure customers' satisfaction turns to be the focus of value creation. The government sector is meant to provide service as opposed to profit making unlike the private sector which are purely driven by profit making (Nunkoo et al., (2020). Service quality is a key component in the success of any business and particularly in the hospitality industry. Quality service delivery is critical in wading cut throat competition significant in influencing customer satisfaction and loyalty to organizations (Prentice, 2020). According to Nikou (2020) service quality has resulted in increased satisfaction and enhanced customer loyalty which is critical driver of business performance. Government or government owned hospitality facilities has been blamed on providing poor quality services. The poor service quality is attributed to lack of continuous development of facilities and human resource. As a result, customer expectations are therefore not met leaving the customers dissatisfied.

Most government sectors organisations have been characterised by poor service delivery due to lack of elaborate customer care policy (Prentice, 2020). The catering establishments in the government sectors rarely put in consideration customers satisfaction as key to maintaining competitiveness. This is attributed to various factors within and outside the government organisations does not strife to promote customer satisfaction.

Studies on customer satisfaction in government institutions have mainly focused on other service delivery like customer care, access to services, duration or time taken to access government services but little has been focused on catering services. The government sector under the governments and other government entities run catering establishments whose customers' satisfaction is not widely researched. This study therefore sought to establish the influence of catering service quality dimensions on customer satisfaction within selected government institutions in Nairobi -Kenya.

1.3 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to establish the influence of service quality dimensions of catering services and customer satisfaction in government institutions in Nairobi - Kenya.

1.4 Specific Objectives

The following specific objectives guided this study;

i) To determine the customer expectations and experience of service quality dimensions of catering services in government institution in Nairobi Kenya

ii) To compare customer expectations and experience of service quality dimensions of catering services in government institution in Nairobi Kenya

iii) To establish how customer satisfaction is influenced by quality service dimensions of catering services in government institutions in Kenya

1.5   Research Hypothesis

H_{o1} There is no significant difference between customer expectations and experience of service quality dimension of catering services in government institution in Nairobi - Kenya

H$_{o2}$ There is no significant variance between customer expectations and experience of service quality dimensions of catering services in government institution in Nairobi –Kenya

H$_{o3}$ Customer satisfaction is not influenced by service quality dimensions of catering services in government institutions in Nairobi - Kenya

H$_{o3}$ (a) Tangibles dimensions of service quality do not significantly influence customer satisfaction in government institutions in Nairobi - Kenya

H$_{o3}$ (b) Reliability dimension of service quality do not significantly influence customer satisfaction in government institutions in Nairobi - Kenya

H$_{o3}$ (c) Assurance dimension of service quality do not significantly influence customer satisfaction in government institutions in Nairobi - Kenya

H$_{o3}$ (d) Empathy dimension of service quality do not significantly influence customer satisfaction in government institutions in Nairobi - Kenya

H$_{o3}$ (e) Responsiveness dimension of service quality do not significantly influence customer satisfaction in government institutions in Nairobi – Kenya.

1.6 Significance of the Study

This study comes at a time when the government sector is facing criticism to improve their services and hence the need to improve customer satisfaction in the government sector. The findings of this study will be useful to: Government catering establishment since it will serve as a benchmark in an effort to improve customers' satisfaction. It will also be beneficial to management of government catering establishments since it will offer insight for decision making and policy formulation that will improve quality service for customer satisfaction. The results of this study will contribute to the body of

knowledge and literature on customer satisfaction in the field of catering in the government sector.

1.7 Scope of the Study

The scope of this study mainly focused on collecting data on the influence of service quality on customers satisfaction in catering services offered in Kenya School of Government and Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development in Nairobi. The respondents were clients who patronized the catering units for meetings, workshops and other functions and consumed catering services. The data was collected in the month of November 2021.

This study used closed ended structured questionnaires with, Likert questions to collect primary data. A 7-point SERVQUAL instrument was administered to the customers to be filled before and after the service was rendered. Descriptive statistics and inferential statistics were used to analyse data. Descriptive statistics were used to generate frequencies, percentages, mean and standard deviation for the numerical data of each variable.

1.8 Limitations of the Study

The Covid 19 pandemic posed a major challenge of physical administration of questionnaires to the participants. This challenge was solved by leaving the questionnaires with the management of the KSG and KICD who administered the instruments.

1.9 Assumptions of the Study

This study was conducted with the following assumptions;

i)   The customers completed the questionnaires based on their expectations and experience of catering services only and did not use other elements such as adherence to health protocols to indicate their satisfaction

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews related literature under the following sub-headings: Customer satisfaction, measurements of customer satisfaction, the concept of service quality, service quality and customer satisfaction and service quality dimensions. Finally, summary of literature review and research gap is discussed in this chapter.

2.2 Customers Satisfaction

Customer satisfaction is referred as how well organisations' products and services meet or surpass customer expectations (Thirumaran, Klimkeit & Tang, 2021). A satisfied customer is a key performance indicator of a business that is doing well in a competitive business environment. Customer satisfaction is a critical factor for ensuring organizations retain existing customers and enhance company-customer relationships in an effort to maintain organizations' image, and make them re-purchase and become loyal (Khadka & Maharjan, 2017).

The literature highlights that customer satisfaction is crucial for achieving long-term business success (Zeithaml et al., 1996). To maintain market share and profitability, organizations must outperform competitors by delivering high-quality products or services that ensure customer satisfaction (Tsoukatos & Rand, 2006). According to Oliver (1980), customer satisfaction arises when the performance of products or services meets or exceeds customer expectations. Conversely, dissatisfaction occurs when performance falls short of these expectations (Munusamy, 2006). Various studies define customer satisfaction and dissatisfaction based on whether a business meets or fails to meet customer expectations (Chidambaram & Ramachandran, 2012; Kheng et

al., 2010). When expectations are fulfilled, customers are satisfied; when they are not, dissatisfaction results (Oliver, 1980). Lau and Cheung (2013) suggest that customer satisfaction is influenced by the comparison between what customers anticipate should happen and what actually occurs (perceived performance). Additionally, satisfaction enhances the perception of quality and encourages repeat purchases.

According to Were, (2017) government hospitality institutions place more emphasis on providing services with little emphasis on creating customer loyalty as compared to private ones. In the study, Were, (2017) argues that the management of government institutions don't put emphasis of creating a customer loyalty. This means that management of these government hospitality institutions do not create an affective emotional attachment and identification with the brand they offer.

Customer expectations can be derived from events, activities and experiences that the customer thinks will happen (Kotler and Keller, 2016). The outcome of a service or experience is customer satisfaction or dissatisfaction. According to various researches, some of the factors attributed to customer satisfaction include location, value for money, hotel comfort, level of cleanliness and efficiency of service Nikou, (2020). Furthermore, Prentice, (2020) suggest that apart from price, a good and convenient location coupled with good service are key determinants that influence customers' hotel selection and overall customer satisfaction.

Customer experience is the product of an interface between an organisation and a customer over the period of their contact or interaction. This interaction includes a customer's attraction, awareness, discovery, cultivation, advocacy and purchase and use of a service. It is measured by the individual's experience during all points of contact against the individual's expectations.

According to World Trade Organisation (WTO) report on regional breakdown of world travel and tourism statistics of 1985 customer satisfaction is a "psychological concept that involves the feeling of well-being and pleasure that results from obtaining what one hopes for and expects from an appealing product and/or service" (WTO, 2015). A customer is said to be satisfied if after buying or using product or service, the result is equal or better than expectation, it means the expectation has positive confirmation. In the opposite case, if the result is lower than expectation, we have negative confirmation hence the customer is not satisfied. A positive confirmation is an indicator of satisfied customers' expectation. The main concern of the hospitality industry is to meet customer needs and desires in this era of competitive global arena (Loizos & Lycourgos, 2005). Customers always remain with a memory of the experience of a service rendered to them which may be good, bad or indifferent. This is so since customers always expect high quality service from the service provider. Good service to the customer leads to favourable customer service experience which in return leads to customer satisfaction.

Customer experience and satisfaction is a result of many factors. These factors include; type of service offered, communication between the guest and staff, quality of facilities, quality of staff, the way customer concerns are treated among others. These factors determine the extent of customer experience and ultimate customer satisfaction that affect business. Many authors have written on the reasons why organisation invests on meeting customer service experience and satisfaction. For instance, Richardson, (2010) argues that organisations who are conscious of their business performance in terms of service, image and profitability must invest in meeting customer experience. He further noted that organisations need to plan on how to meet customer satisfaction since bad customer interaction may lead to unsatisfied customer leading to poor business performance. Organisations develop programmes and spend lot resources and time to

ensure customers have good experience and are satisfied on the services and products they offer.

2.3 Measurement of Customer Satisfaction

In an effort to meet customer satisfaction organisations invest in various interventions. Such interventions are; customer relations management, staff image, price management, product and service branding among others. In a study on customer satisfaction, Flores et al., (2020) established that customer relationship management had a major impact on customer loyalty and retention practices in the hotel sector.

Nikou, (2020) posited that SERVQUAL model can be used to measure customer satisfaction through service quality attributes like empathy, tangibility, reliability, responsiveness and apathy of the staff as a measure for assessing quality of service.

Customer satisfaction conceptualization concept is the most widely accepted in determining the level of satisfaction. The concept is the Theory of Expectancy Disconfirmation developed by Oliver. It proposed that the result of the difference between expected and perceived performance gives the level of customers' satisfaction (Kottler and Keller, 2016). Positive disconfirmation, customers' satisfaction, is when services and/or products is better than expected and worse than expected gives customers' dissatisfaction, negative disconfirmation.

Flores et al., (2020) observed that understanding the customers' attitudes provides the hoteliers with information on how to better improve and implement services. They further noted that personalised customer service can lead to memorable experience that can make the guest make a repeat visit or refer other customers. They also argued that customers' expectations on the services and goods provided are done through collection of their opinions in order to have a holistic improvement of goods and service provision.

A customer is said to be satisfied if after buying or using product or service, the result is equal or better than expectation, it means the expectation has positive confirmation (WTO, 2015). In the opposite case, if the result is lower than expectation, we have negative confirmation hence the customer is not satisfied. A positive confirmation is an indicator of satisfied customers' expectation. Customer satisfaction measurement on the hospitality products has become one of the strategies used organizations to determine the competitiveness of establishment (Gardi et al., 2020). Government institutions mostly suffer from bureaucratic process which affects their service delivery. They have been accused of having poor quality products and services due to lack of strategies of satisfying their customers. The private sector spends large sums of money to carry out research for developing new products for the purpose of meeting customer needs. This is not the case with government sector which in most cases is underfunded, is managed poorly. Since 2002 the Kenya the government sector has been put on performance contract in an effort to improve service delivery (Korir, Rotich, & Bengat, 2015). Development of new quality products is one the strategies adopted by government institutions to ensure customer satisfaction. However, there is need to determine if they do actually influence customer satisfaction in government institutions.

2.4 Hospitality Service Features and Customer Satisfaction with Catering Services

Quality service delivery plays an important role in motivating customer satisfaction and needs to be cultivated by service providers. Service providers develop services and products that have unique features for the purpose of attracting customers. According to Kauffman, (2007) features are characteristics that a product or service provide. Service features can be defined as the quality or the user requirements that make a customer recognise the value of a service or product (Lubbe, 2003). There are a wide range of factors that contribute to customer satisfaction in catering services

which are embedded in hospitality service features (Mubiri, 2016). According to Lubbe, (2003), service features are related to factors of frequency, reliability, regularity, suitability, location, convenience and safety and security. Reliability has been found as the most influential service feature on motivating customer satisfaction (Smith, Smith & Clarke, 2007).

According to Mitchell, (2011) service features are distinctive characteristic of a good/product or service that differentiates it from similar items. Hospitality service providers offer unique features in attempt to attract customers and in so doing remain competitive (Kobylanski & Allegheny, 2011). These features are aimed at providing benefits to customers. However, customers in most cases when they buy goods or services are interested with benefit and do not care much about the features that are unique or superior provided by the establishments.

Hospitality features that contribute to customer satisfaction can be grouped into catering establishment physical facilities and service features (Lepkova & Žūkaitė, 2012). The physical features may include; spacious well-lit dining hall, conference halls, accommodations facilities, internet among others. Service features may include; a 24-hour room service, free high-speed internet, free laundry for children among others. The quality, adequacy and availability of these hospitality features plays a critical role in making customer satisfied with the services offered. Catering establishments spend a lot of resources to avail or improve existing hospitality feature to lure and maintain customer flow (Mazumder & Hasan, 2014). According to Forozia, Zadeh & Gilani, (2013) argues that in order to ensure customers satisfaction hospitality facilities must endavour to improve service features that are easily identifiable with customers. Rebranding of some facilities like accommodation rooms, conference facilities, dining

rooms and others are done to make establishment unique and competitive (Lepkova & Žūkaitė, 2012).

2.5 Quality of products and Customer Satisfaction with Catering Services

The quality of product is major factor for ensuring customer satisfaction for any organisation (Goodman, 2014). Quality is defined a value or conformance to the specifications which can lead the organization to focus on efficiency (Beck & Melo, 2014). Customers satisfy their needs by buying products that have meet their perceived quality. The perceived product quality is measured based on eight dimensions (Kusuma, Suyadi & Abdillah, 2014). According to Ramachandran & Pandian, (2016), these eight quality dimensions are; performance -which refers to a product's primary operating characteristics, features- which are additional characteristics that enhance the appeal of the product or service to the user, reliability- ability of the product to meet specifics with time period and conformance – which refers to correctness of the product or service to meet the specified standards. Others are durability which measures the ability of the product to remain operational for a long time, serviceability – the ease at which a product can be put into service when it breaks down, aesthetics - represents the individual's personal preference and perceived quality - quality attributed to a good or service based on indirect measure.

The competitiveness of companies or organisations is dependent on what percentage of the customers they can keep (Lepkova & Žūkaitė, 2012). The larger percentages of customers they manage to retain the more the companies make profits or remain competitive and largely depends on quality products. Quality products attract customers and also create an amicable relationship with companies creating avenues of seeking the same product from the same company in future. Quality products provide a room

of retaining customers which ultimately leads to high customer satisfaction, competitive advantage and high profits which leads to success of the organisation (Carevn, 2008).

It is advisable to have a mechanism of measuring quality of products by relating the measures of quality to real customer satisfaction (Kangogo, Musiega, & Manyasi, 2013). There is a way of measuring the effect of hospitality products on customer satisfaction. For instance, use of feedback by customers on the effect of products offered through determining percentage of complaints (Chotipanich, 2004).

Customer satisfaction measurement on the hospitality products has become one of the strategies used organizations to determine the competitiveness of establishment (Chairit, 2010). Public institutions mostly suffer from bureaucratic process which affects their service delivery (Falconer, 2014). They have been accused of having poor quality products and services due to lack of strategies of satisfying their customers. The private sector spends large sums of money to carry out research for developing new products for the purpose of meeting customer needs. This is not the case with public sector which in most cases is underfunded, is managed poorly. Since 2002 the Kenya public sector has been put on performance contract in an effort to improve service delivery (Korir, Rotich, & Bengat, 2015). Development of new quality products is one the strategies adopted by public institutions to ensure customer satisfaction. However, there is need to determine if they do actually influence customer satisfaction in public institutions.

2.6 The Concept of Service Quality

Service quality is defined as the perceived quality of goods and services which are distinct from objective or actual quality since it is based on consumer judgment (Lee & Hwan, 2005). Lewis and Booms (1983) define service quality as a measure of how well

the delivered service level meets customer expectations. Delivering quality service is simply conforming consistently to customer expectations, while Spathis et al., (2004) identify service quality as an attitude for being customers judgment on the overall service. Fogli (2006) argued that service quality is a global judgment or attitude relating to a particular service and a cognitive judgment, while Zeithaml et al., (1990) and Nam (2008), explained that service quality as the customers overall impression of the relative inferiority or superiority of the organization or its services. He further posed that it is a fulfillment of customers' expectations Al-Tamimi et al., (2009) representing the superiority or excellence as perceived by the customer and the product of the effort that every member of the organization invests in satisfying customers (Legcevic, 2008).

Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry (1985) defined service quality as the gap between expected service and perceived service performance, and they introduced the SERVQUAL measurement technique to assess this quality. Edvardsson (1998) defined it as the extent to which customer expectations are met and their needs and wants are addressed, while Kandampully (1998) offered a similar view, emphasizing the importance of fulfilling customer expectations through the service provided. In contrast, Teas, (1993) characterized service quality as the comparison between actual performance and ideal standards. This review highlights that service quality definitions frequently centre around the customer. However, relying solely on what the customer expresses may not always be adequate. It is essential to uncover and identify the customer's unspoken needs and expectations (Atilgan, 2001).

The measurement of service quality is the initial step in the process of improving and developing service quality. When a business gains accurate insight into its current quality level, it can take more effective actions to address areas that need improvement (Usta & Memis, 2009). To enhance service quality, a business must first assess its

current standing and then outline the necessary steps for improvement (Akbaba & Kilinc, 2001)

According to Prentice et al., (2020), Service quality is the attribute through which customers perceive differences between products and services of one provider from the other. The quality of service is the clients' total impression of the superiority and inferiority of an organization and its services as compared to other organization's services. The quality of a service is major factor for ensuring customer satisfaction for any organisation. Quality is the value or conformance to the specifications which can lead the organization to focus on efficiency. Customers satisfy their needs by buying products that have meet their perceived quality. The perceived product quality is measured based on eight dimensions (Ismael et al., 2021). These eight quality dimensions are; performance -which refers to a product's primary operating characteristics, features- which are additional characteristics that enhance the appeal of the product or service to the user, reliability- ability of the product to meet specifics with time period and conformance – which refers to correctness of the product or service to meet the specified standards. Others are durability which measures the ability of the product to remain operational for a long time, serviceability – the ease at which a product can be put into service when it breaks down, aesthetics - represents the individual's personal preference and perceived quality - quality attributed to a good or service based on indirect measure.

The competitiveness of companies or organisations is dependent on what percentage of the customers they can keep (Ismael et al., 2021). The larger percentages of customers they manage to retain the more the companies make profits or remain competitive and largely depends on quality products. Quality services attract customers and also create an amicable relationship with companies creating avenues of seeking the same product

from the same company in future. Quality services provide a room of retaining customers which ultimately leads to high customer satisfaction, competitive advantage and high profits which leads to success of the organisation (Gardi et al., 2021). It is advisable to have a mechanism of measuring quality of products by relating the measures of quality to real customer satisfaction.

Since services are consumed by customers as they are being produced, customers are concerned not only with the quality of the final output, as is common with product quality, but also with the quality of various elements of the service they engage with throughout the entire production process. This characteristic of services has led to the development of the concept of service quality dimensions (Sevimli, 2006).

Researchers have proposed different dimensions and tested various approaches to assess the quality of services provided. Parasuraman et al., (1988) developed the service quality gap model, identifying 10 key dimensions to evaluate the disparity between customer expectations and their actual perceptions. This model, along with subsequent research by Parasuraman and colleagues, has been widely adopted by service quality researchers and has become a significant tool in measuring service quality.

Parasuraman et al., (1988) systematically applied 10 dimensions -physical/tangible features, reliability, responsiveness, competence, courtesy, credibility, security/safety, convenience, communication, and understanding the customer- across four service sectors: banking, telephone companies, credit cards, and product repair and maintenance services. This work led to the development of the SERVQUAL scale, which includes 22 propositions categorized into five dimensions (Parasuraman et al., 1988).

The most widely recognized and popular models for assessing service quality is SERVQUAL, developed by Parasuraman et al., (1985). SERVQUAL is a model designed to evaluate perceived service quality through an instrument that measures how consumers perceive service quality by comparing their expectations with actual service experiences (Amin & Issa, 2008). This model is applicable across various industries. It includes five dimensions of service quality: (1) Tangibles—the appearance of physical elements; (2) Reliability—the dependability and accuracy of the service provider; (3) Responsiveness—the promptness and helpfulness of the service provider; (4) *Assurance*—the knowledge, courtesy, and ability of employees to instill trust and confidence; and (5) Empathy—the level of personalized attention and care given to customers (Parasuraman et al., 1988).

2.7 Service Quality and Customer Satisfaction

The primary goal of businesses is to achieve their targeted profitability levels within specified time frames. To reach this objective, businesses need to maintain a broad and valuable customer portfolio. This requires them to consistently ensure high levels of customer satisfaction among those purchasing their products and services.

Ismael et al., (2021) observed that customers expect a very high quality of services especially when the price is high and generally expect lowly priced services to be of low quality. Gardi et al., (2021) posited that service quality have a significant positive relationship with customer satisfaction. Anwar et al., (2021) observed that in a hotel setting, dining services have a fundamental influence on the perceived service quality. Flores et al., (2020) further recommended that quality of food; environment and service quality do influence customer intentions to refer other customers to a hotel. Having the correct price for quality services can result in customer loyalty and satisfaction.

Gardi et al., (2021) examined the determinants of customer satisfaction and found out that quality of services and products, price, perceived security as well as the environment including the employees have a positive influence on customer satisfaction. Prentice et al., (2020) on hospitality customers observed that customers have their needs according to their status as they also compare quality of services by different providers and their resulting satisfaction from perceive fairness to price and value of the products

According to Bahadur et al., (2018) welcoming of customers suggestions and provision of quality goods and services comes in handy in meeting their expectations and satisfaction. It also helped in their retention, loyalty and cultivating good strong relationship between customer satisfaction and employees. According to Nunkoo, et al., (2020), checking on employees' behaviour towards customers and customers' expectations beefs up quality assurance of the service rendered. In this way if knowledge about customers' expectations lacks, it means losing of customers to other businesses.

There are a wide range of factors that contribute to customer satisfaction in catering services which are embedded in hospitality service features (Mubiri, 2016). Service features are related to factors of frequency, reliability, regularity, suitability, location, convenience and safety and security. Reliability has been found as the most influential service feature on motivating customer satisfaction.

Hospitality features that contribute to customer satisfaction can be grouped into catering establishment physical facilities and service features (Nunkoo et al., 2020). The physical features may include; spacious well-lit dining hall, conference halls, accommodations facilities, internet among others. Service features may include; a 24-

hour room service, free high-speed internet, free laundry for children among others. The quality, adequacy and availability of these hospitality features plays a critical role in making customer satisfied with the services offered. Catering establishments spend a lot of resources to avail or improve existing hospitality feature to lure and maintain customer flow According to Gardi et al., (2021) argues that in order to ensure customers satisfaction hospitality facilities must endeavor to improve service features that are easily identifiable with customers. Rebranding of some facilities like accommodation rooms, conference facilities, dining rooms and others are done to make establishment unique and competitive.

Quality service delivery plays an important role in motivating customer satisfaction and needs to be cultivated by service providers. Service providers develop services and products that have unique features for the purpose of attracting customers. According to Abdullah, (2020) features are characteristics that a product or service provide. Service features can be defined as the quality or the user requirements that make a customer recognise the value of a service or product.

The main concern of the hospitality industry is to meet customer needs and desires in this era of competitive global arena (Faraj et al., 2021). Customers always remain with a memory of the experience of a service rendered to them which may be good, bad or indifferent. This is so since customers always expect high quality service from the service provider. Good service to the customer leads to favourable customer service experience which in return leads to customer satisfaction.

Customer experience and satisfaction is a result of many factors. These factors include; type of service offered, communication between the guest and staff, quality of facilities, quality of staff, the way customer concerns are treated among others. These factors

determine the extent of customer experience and ultimate customer satisfaction that affect business. Many authors have written on the reasons why organisation invests on meeting customer service experience and satisfaction. For instance, Abdullar et al., (2019) argues that organisations who are conscious of their business performance in terms of service, image and profitability must invest in meeting customer experience. He further noted that organisations need to plan on how to meet customer satisfaction since bad customer interaction may lead to unsatisfied customer leading to poor business performance. Organisations develop programmes and spend lot resources and time to ensure customers have good experience and are satisfied on the services and products they offer.

Level of customer satisfaction is not to the delightful level. In different areas in the world the services being rendered do not fully satisfy customers' expectations. In Rochester, Kent, England, in a study on guest satisfaction and guest loyalty, food and beverages quality, room amenities and room comfort are perceived as to be inadequate, reporting dissatisfaction (Gardi et al., 2021). The dissatisfaction was not brought by staff members because personnel performance is mostly satisfying service according to the majority of guests.

Moreover, data analysed on customers satisfaction on services, recreation is on a fair level thus need to be improved. On a general perspective as viewed on an umbrella notch, customers are usually happy with hotels' front desk, decorations, atmosphere, facilities and staff appearance. Responsiveness to customers is another satisfying factor which is mainly giving of information on services offered in an appropriate speed and also timely accommodations (Nunkoo et al., 2020). Nevertheless, staff professionalism

and experience, politeness and security are up to satisfactory levels in most of the highly established hotels.

For businesses to achieve high levels of customer satisfaction, it is crucial to understand and address the needs and expectations of both current and potential customers. Adopting a customer-focused approach is essential for enhancing customer satisfaction. This approach involves aligning with customer expectations and preferences while ensuring a high quality of service. Effective implementation of a customer-focused strategy is closely linked to meeting these expectations and delivering quality service (Kocbek, 2005).

The connection between perceived quality and customer satisfaction is particularly crucial in the service sector. This is because customers in this sector are concerned not only with the tangible aspects of the service but also with the intangible elements involved in the service delivery process. For instance, in the catering industry, customers consider factors beyond just the quality of the food and beverages. They also consider the ambiance of the establishment, cleanliness, the attitude and behavior of the service staff, and the perceived value for the price paid. Furthermore, due to the simultaneous nature of service delivery, it is challenging for service businesses to rectify quality issues once they occur and address resulting dissatisfaction. Therefore, to enhance customer satisfaction and maintain market competitiveness, catering businesses should focus more on improving their service quality.

To achieve success in a highly competitive market, businesses must offer products and services that effectively meet customer needs, as this is crucial for maintaining their market presence. The high expectations customers have for products and services mean that any shortfall in perceived quality compared to their expectations can result in

dissatisfaction proportional to the gap between expectation and perception. Conversely, high perceived service quality can lead to high customer satisfaction. Therefore, businesses should not only measure customer satisfaction but also analyse the discrepancies between customer expectations and their perceptions of the actual outcomes. This approach helps identify which elements of service quality drive satisfaction or dissatisfaction and can inform customer relations strategies accordingly (Ozturk & Seyhan, 2005).

2.7.1 Tangibles Dimension of Service Quality

Employees play a very significant role in the provision of goods and services in any business organization and particularly the service industry. This is because the services have unique characteristics that make them very different from tangible goods sector. Tangibility refers to the appearance of physical facilities, equipment, personnel and communication materials that makes the product or service practical and usable by the customer (Flores et al., 2020). According to Nikou et al., (2020), tangibles are a key customer service dimension that are visible and attract customers. They identified tangibles as physical facilities (equipment's, personnel and communications materials). This is the physical image of the service that customers will use to assess quality. They may include the hotel's interior decorations, the hotel's staff physical appearance, equipment's and machines, the tidiness and organization of the facility in which the guests are accommodated.

The service design for an establishment involves organizing the physical facilities, decor, ambience, the service setting and lay out, the staffing, uniforms and the standardized operating procedures. This is done for the purpose of improving quality and the interaction between the service provider and its customers in attempt to translate service designs into quality service delivery. Many of the services are produced upon

interaction moment of truth and consumed simultaneously. Service industry more often offer intangible and perishable services since they cannot be stored or transferred. Customers mostly consume intangible and perishable services. However, the hospitality industry ensures the premises, compound and staff are attractive as a means of ensuring customers are satisfied with the physical services (Ismael et al., 2021).

Tangibles according to Carpenter and Moore (2015) in their review of customer satisfaction are one of the key drivers to customer satisfaction in the hospitality industry. The importance of this variable in influencing customer satisfaction as it was underscored by Kottler and Keller (2016). Tangibility presents disparities on customer satisfaction. The tangibility of the hotel alone may not have a great in influence on customer satisfaction. This is so since customer satisfaction in mainly influences by one's perception of service quality offered by the hotel. Education has been found to influence customers to relate tangibles with service quality. The more the customers are educated, the more one is sensitive to the tangibles in the hospitality facilities. Prentice et al., (2020) argue that the level of education enhances the view of the importance of tangibles on customer satisfaction. Hotels spend colossal number of resources to make the physical environment attractive and friendly to the customers. Provision of artwork on walls, reception area, rooms, planting of flowers and well-trimmed lawns, attractive lighting, good décor, clean and designer staff uniform among other are some of the tangible's hotels invest on to make customer service memorable.

2.7.2 Reliability Dimension of Service Quality

Nunkoo et al., (2020) found that reliability means organizations perform a service correctly the first time. Reliability is a customer service dimension that is concerned with how clients perceive to be the facility's staff ability to solve their problems by offering them the rightful services for which they have come to receive in a particular

establishment.This dimension could be considered the extent to which customers can rely on the service promised by the organization (Gardi, et al., 2021).The variables in reliability dimension of customer service may include timely service delivery, offering correct solutions to customer's needs and right orders service. Ismail (2016) further posited that reliability reflects the ability to perform a service as promised dependably and accurately to meet the customer expectations. Reliability is a very important service component for ensuring customer satisfaction.

According to Flores et al., (2020) reliability is a perceived service quality which is a form of attitude and a long run overall evaluation of a product or service. The perception of reliability in service delivery is closely related to the monetary value of service and customer rights. The more the customer is conversant of their consumer rights more they expect prompt and reliable service. Reliability of services can be realised by recruiting the right personnel, motivating them and continuous training of them to ensure delivery of quality service. Continuous training on professionalism of staff, ability to handle customer complaints, friendliness and courtesy of staff are critical soft skills that influenced the quality-of-service delivery that ensure reliability. Nikou et al., (2020) in their studies on the effects on reliability of staff in service provision found that it has a significant impact on customer satisfaction. These studies by the authors above found that reliable service delivery plays a critical role in determining customer satisfaction. Prompt delivery of orders, provision of relevant and reliable information may lead to customer satisfaction. A study by Mmutle & Shonhe (2017) in South Africa found that lack of reliable information leads to poor customer satisfaction on services offered in hospitality industry.

Reliability of service provision is one of the variables that widely used to measure customer satisfaction in service industry as compared to the tangibility. Customers in

most cases before consuming services ask whether the providers of the services are reliable. Provision of reliable services has the possibility of making customers satisfied. Reliable services are measured in terms of speed of delivery; the shorter the duration the more the service is reliable. It is also measured in terms of the quality of service for example well cooked and proper presentation as expected.

2.7.3 Assurance Dimension of Service Quality

Assurance is a fundamental customer service dimension (Muthukumar & Kumar, 2018). It relates to the experience and professionalism of the staff that serve in hospitality facility, the hotel atmosphere, how calm and quiet the place is, the price charged to the clients as well as the measures put in place to ensure security of the guests. These attributes give an assuring perception that customers will get the service they are seeking in a particular hotel. Assurance according to Ismail (2016), means the knowledge and courtesy of staff and their ability to show confidence and convey trust to hotel customers. This is knowledge with which employees have to inspire trust and confidence in hotel service. Assurance indicates the attitude of the employees, their behaviour, the staff's ability to provide friendly, confidential, courteous and competent services. There should be clear explanations before care is offered and explanations of services to customers before they are given.

Abdullar et al., (2019) on hotel guest satisfaction found that the overall customer's perception of service quality provided fell below expectations where service assurance was not guaranteed. This study also found that high levels of guests' satisfaction were achieved in hotels that to a large extent focusing on assurance and reliability. Similar outcome was found by Flores et al., (2020) on Service Quality in Hospitality Services. He established that perceptions of service quality were found to be far lower than that of expectations where assurance of quality of service was not guaranteed. The same was

noted by Anwar et al., (2020) in their research on service quality in hotels. They confirmed that perception scores fell below the expectation scores of service quality where hotel management did not assure customers on the services provided. It is imperative to note that customer satisfaction is influenced by perceptions of service quality, product quality, and price as well influenced by how establishment assure customers on the quality of services provided. Failure to assure customers for example in case there is delay, shortage or missing items among others may lead to customer dissatisfied. Assurance is a strong virtue as it makes customers feel secure and comfortable. Assurance if exhibited through courtesy of staff, knowledge of personnel about product/service. Establishment need to invest in guest relations by ensuring all staff are equipped with soft skills for assuring customers on the service delivery notwithstanding things can go wayward.

2.7.4 Responsiveness Dimension of Service Quality

Responsiveness is the willingness of employees to help customers and to provide prompt and quick service (Kottler and Keller, 2016). They postulate that responsiveness is an important customer service dimension that is related to how customers in a hotel facility are offered the information they need. This may include how the guests are welcomed inside a facility, giving them undivided attention, how staff responds to requests made by the guests and the speed at which service required by the guests is offered.

According to Ismail (2016), responsiveness is the willingness of a service provider to assist customers and give them a prompt service. The customers must see that the service providers as ready to do what they ought to do in service provision. Responsiveness can be measured by the time required or needed to deal with customers from the time a customer places a request to the time they receive that service.

Responsiveness is portrayed through the soft skills of the employees, their attitude and behaviour when the service is being produced at the point of contact or moment of truth (Mok et al., 2017). The manager also develops service design of the service operations, develops operating standards by setting out standard operating procedures, specifications and communication channels that should ultimately result into customer satisfaction in the service delivery. However, due to the unique nature of services, the management perception of what the customer expects and the customer expectation more often varies. This call for the management to come up with strategies of ensuring staff both in front and back of house are responsive to the customers' needs. This may be achieved by providing prompt services, informing customers about time of service and being confident. Responsiveness is a critical driver of the customer satisfaction and created customer loyalty. The same was noted by Mmutle and Shonhe, (2017) who argued that responsiveness is a key factor for customer satisfaction. It is an important tool that should not be ignored by hospitality establishment in augmenting their income and market share.

Managers of hospitality establishments have the duty to identify the needs of the customers and put in place mechanisms of ensuring staff are responsive during service delivery. Service design, planning, knowledge about the customer, anticipating customer needs well in advance are critical in ensuring that service delivery exceeds customer expectation.

2.7.5 Empathy Dimension of Service Quality

Empathy relates to the provision of caring, individualized attention by the employees to the customers, according to Nguyen et al., (2018) empathy just like all SERVQUAL dimensions have different impact on the final service quality though it is given little emphasis when it comes to service planning. Empathy as far as customer's service

dimensions is concerned with how available are the hotel staff to help guests get the service they need. This service attribute also includes the care and attention that guests receive while at a facility, the flexibility of the staff as well as the hotel's prevision for customer necessities.

Empathy can also be considered to be individual attention and caring by hotel employees to the customers who frequent the hotels. This is achieved by being friendly, courteous and having client's best interests at heart. Guests appreciate individualized attention and this goes a long way in influencing their satisfaction or dissatisfaction according to Ismail (2016). Studies by Nikou et al., (2020) & Prentice et al., (2020) on interaction between front of house employee and customer revealed that customer satisfaction and loyalty increase where empathy to guests is practiced. The same was noted by Abbasi Agnihotri and Krush (2015) who established that lack of empathy or an inability to understand the customers' perspective create a poor service encounter and results in customer dissatisfaction. These observations imply that for any hospitality establishment to meet the customer satisfaction, it should invest on service planning that will equip staff with skills, attitudes and values of showing empathy. This is a virtue that is not easily learned in training institutions but is rather acquired out of experiences of interaction with customers (Bahadur, Aziz, & Zulfiqar, 2018).

2.8 Theoretical Framework

The study was be guided by SERVQUAL model and Expectancy-Disconfirmation Theory. SERVQUAL model is suitable for measuring service quality while Expectancy-Disconfirmation Theory was anchor customer satisfaction by testing the discrepancy between expectations and performance.

2.8.1 SERVQUAL Model

The model was developed in the mid-1980s by Zeithaml, Parasuraman and Berry to measure quality in the service sector (Kottler and Keller, 2016). SERVQUAL models adopt five key dimensions and the variables. These five key dimensions are: Tangibility, Reliability, Responsiveness, Assurance and Empathy. The characteristic of each dimension is summarised in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1: The Five Key Dimensions of SERVQUAL model and the Variables

Dimension	Variables
Tangibility	Attractiveness (external), Internal decorations, Staff appearance & tidiness, modern well-maintained facilities
Reliability	Timely service delivery, staff able to solve customer problems, right orders service
Responsiveness	Welcoming of customers, Response for requests, Giving information offering for service, Speed of service
Assurance	Staff experience and professionalism, Staff politeness, Price of service, Effort done by staff for security, Hotel atmosphere (calm and quit)
Empathy	Accessibility, Staff availability, Attention paid by staff, Staff flexibility, Hotel prevision for customer necessities

Adopted from: Luk and Layton (2002)

SERVQUAL model have many advantages over other customer satisfaction models in that it can be used regularly in tracking customer's perception of hotel's quality of service as compared to other service providers according to Kottler and Keller, 2016). Further the SERVQUAL model presents businesses with opportunities to have their service quality appraised based on their responsiveness, reliability, empathy, tangibles

provided and assurance. Thirdly, the model allows institutions categorize their customers into segments according to SERVQUAL scores Nguyen et al., (2018). The model can also be used comparatively when doing bench marking in hotel institutions.

Despite being widely used in measuring service quality, SERVQUAL model has been subjected to numerous criticisms, both from the conceptual and operational aspect. For example, Gardi et al., (2021) argued that the model is based on an affirmation pattern rather than on the pattern of understanding. The model therefore is not able to tie in with proven economical, statistical and psychological theories. SERVQUAL is geared towards the process of service delivery rather than on the result of service experience. He also noted that the five dimensions are not universal and the aspects of service quality are associated to the context. The term "expectations" in operations has multiple interpretations (Gardi et al., (2021)). Over the years, consumers prefer to use the standards in evaluating services as opposed to expectations. Furthermore, the gap model has little evidence that proves that consumer evaluates service quality in light of perception-expectation gaps. SERVEQUAL was suitable in this study as it gives the latitude to measure customer satisfaction using an all-inclusive five dimensions (tangibility, responsiveness, assurance, empathy and reliability).

2.8.2 Expectancy-Disconfirmation Theory

The theory of expectancy and disconfirmation was postulated by Oliver L. Richard in 1980 this model elucidates that customers do a comparison between the service performance and their expectation towards the service. The model further explains that customer satisfaction does happen when the perception of service performance levels or exceeds the expectations from the customers. The model has been used extensively in explaining the citizenry satisfaction or dissatisfaction with government services (Jilke and Baekgaard, 2020; Grimmelikhuijsen et al., 2017, (Mok, Oliver, and Ryzin 2017).

Expectancy Disconfirmation Theory builds upon the foundation of Confirmation Disconfirmation Theory. Expectancy Disconfirmation Theory evaluates customer satisfaction by examining the gap between customers' expectations and their actual experiences with perceived products or services.

Expectations shape what customers anticipate regarding the performance of products and services. Expectancy Disconfirmation Theory can describe various customer behaviors during the purchase process. Firstly, returning customers have initial expectations based on their previous experiences with a specific product or service. These expectations are generally more aligned with reality. Secondly, new customers, who lack first-hand experience with the product or service, base their initial expectations on feedback from other customers, advertisements, or media.

Perceived performance reflects the customers experience with a product or service after use, which may exceed or fall short of their initial expectations. Both types of customers those with first-hand experience and those without will use the purchased products or services over time and assess the actual quality provided by the business.

Disconfirmation is the gap between a customer's initial expectations and the actual performance observed. According to the literature, disconfirmation can be categorized into three types: positive disconfirmation, negative disconfirmation, and simple disconfirmation.

Critics of the expectancy and disconfirmation theory however argue that for a citizen to be satisfied or dissatisfied with a particular government service, based not only of their expectations but also other variables like what the service was supposed to achieve, minimum threshold set when instituting such services and other externalities (Ryzin 2017).

Ryzin, (2004) did a study that tested the model of expectancy and disconfirmation's application in government service. The study reported that the model has been extensively applied successfully in analyzing the satisfaction of the members of the government on services offered. It was however postulated that understanding the citizen expectations is critical since it's the yardstick with which they measure satisfaction of government services.

The model of expectancy and disconfirmation is important in this study as it explains the perceptions of customers in catering government institutions and this is important as it gives a satisfaction rationale. The theory helps match expectations and experiences of customers in government catering institutions and explains the relationships of these two important variables in customer satisfaction.

The actual performance of a product or service falls short of customer expectations that brings negative disconfirmation resulting in customer dissatisfaction. Conversely, positive disconfirmation happens when the performance exceeds expectations, leading to customer satisfaction. If there is no difference between the customers expectations and the actual performance, meaning the perceived performance matches the expectations, simple confirmation occurs. There is some debate in the literature regarding the definition of simple confirmation. Some researchers argue that satisfaction is the outcome of simple confirmation, while others suggest that it results in a state of neither satisfaction nor dissatisfaction, leading to simple satisfaction.

Expectancy Disconfirmation Theory is frequently utilized to explain Information Systems continuance (Bhattacherjee, 2001; Roca et al., 2006). According to this theory, a user intention to continue using an Information System is shaped by their satisfaction, which hinges on the gap between perceived quality and initial expectations. Thus,

customer satisfaction significantly influences both repurchase intentions and word of mouth recommendations. The Expectancy Disconfirmation Theory model comprises five key stages (Oliver, 1980): Pre-Purchase Expectations- Customers develop expectations before buying a product or service. Post-Purchase Evaluation - After purchasing, customers assess the quality of the product or service. Comparison of Expectations and Perceptions- Customers compare the actual quality with their pre-purchase expectations. If the perceived quality meets or exceeds expectations, these are positively confirmed or disconfirmed. If the perceived quality falls short of expectations, they are negatively disconfirmed. Formation of Satisfaction or Dissatisfaction - Based on the level of disconfirmation, customers experience either satisfaction or dissatisfaction. Behavioral Outcomes - Satisfied customers are likely to intend repurchases and share positive feedback, while dissatisfied customers are inclined to avoid future purchases and spread negative reviews.

Star ratings posted by customers on retailer websites play a crucial role in shaping initial expectations for recommended products. These ratings help prediction services estimate the likelihood of a customer's purchase based on others' ratings. Additionally, star ratings are vital for assessing perceived product quality after purchase, as high ratings suggest positive views and low ratings indicate negative perceptions (Mudambi and Schuff, 2010).

2.9 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework identifies the variables that when put together explain the issue under study. The conceptual framework is therefore the set of broad ideas aimed at explaining the relationship between the independent variables (factors) and the dependent variables (outcomes). The independent variables (customer expectations,

experiences and influence of service quality). Figure 2.1 shows the schematic diagram of the independent and the dependent variables.

Independent Variables   **Dependent Variable**

┌───┐
| **Expectations and experiences on** |
| **Tangibles** |
| • Attractiveness |
| • Well-groomed staff |
| • High quality equipment and tools |
| • Appealing facilities (Good décor) |
└───┘

┌───┐
| **Expectations and experiences reliability** |
| • Well-trained and professional staff |
| • Prompt and satisfactory handling |
| complaints and problems |
| • Provision of services as promised |
| • Assured security |
└───┘

┌───┐
| **Expectations and experiences assurance** |
| • Safe and secure place for guests |
| • Instilling confidence in guests |
| • Convenience of service availability |
| • Knowledge of the host |
└───┘

┌───┐   ┌──────────────────────────┐
Expectations and experiences		**Customer**
responsiveness		**Satisfaction**
• Information easily assessed by customers		• Customer loyalty
• Prompt provision of requested service to		• Repeat intentions
customers		• Customer retention
• Staff are always willing to help customers		• Referral
• Hosts always have time to respond to		• Reduced customer
customer requests		Complains
└───┘   └──────────────────────────┘

┌───┐
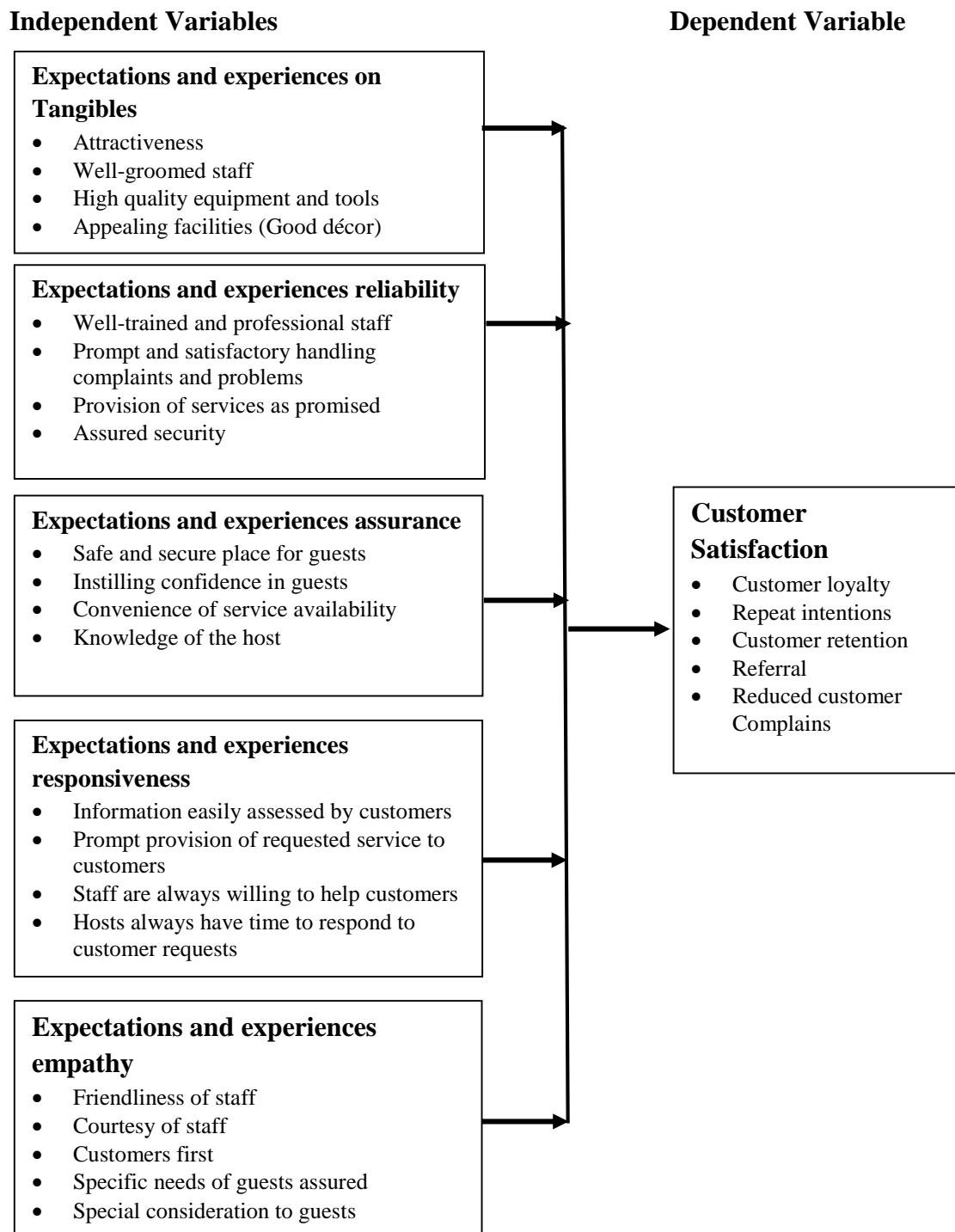| **Expectations and experiences** |
| **empathy** |
| • Friendliness of staff |
| • Courtesy of staff |
| • Customers first |
| • Specific needs of guests assured |
| • Special consideration to guests |
└───┘

Figure 2.1: Conceptual framework for the study

Source: **Modified from Parasuraman et al., (1998)**

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

This section describes the study area, research design that was adopted in this study. It also covers target population, sampling size determination, sampling procedure and research instruments. In addition, the validity and reliability, data collection procedures and data analysis techniques and measurement of variables are described.

3.2 Study Area

The study was conducted in Kenya School of Government (KSG) and Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD) which are major venues for meetings, conferences and training. These two institutions based in Nairobi City are ISO certified and fully owned by the Kenya government. These two institutions were chosen because they have catering facilities and cater for large number of clients from the government and private sectors. Both institutions provide accommodation and catering services to wide range of clients with different socio-economic backgrounds.

The KSG formerly known as Kenya Institute of Administration (KIA) was established by the KSG Act (No. 9 of 2012). KSG is a State Corporation established to offer management training, research, consultancy and advisory services to the government sector. KSG in located at Lower Kabete Road, Nairobi about 15 Kilometres from Nairobi Central Business District. It offers services to both National and County governments, players in the private sector and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs). The major clients are middle and senior managers drawn from the government and private sector.

The KSG have a first-class conference facility equipped with an amphitheatre with a sitting capacity of 400 persons. Catering services are offered within by a professionally highly trained catering staff. Combinations of continental and African cuisines are served with a variety of dishes. KSG have an accommodation capacity of 220 persons of which 164 of these rooms are standard while 56 are executive suites. The rooms are well maintained, comfortable and conveniently situated with a television set, telephone and a study desk. KSG has expansive and serene gardens with ample parking space make it ideal for meetings, conferences and trainings. KSG was selected for this study due its capacity to cater for large volumes of diverse clients and it's busy throughout the year.

The Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD) as an Institute was established through the KICD Act No. 4 of 2013 of the laws of Kenya. It is located about 4 kilometres from Nairobi Central Business District along Desai Road off Murang'a road. KICD core function is to conduct research and develop curricular for all levels of education below the university. It also develops print and electronic curriculum support materials and overseas curriculum implementation. It also has the mandate of evaluating, vetting and approving the curricular and curriculum support materials for basic and tertiary education.

KICD have modern conference facilities which offers a wide range of services which include a modern auditorium hall hosting up to 450 persons. It also offers accommodation and quality catering services in TAASISI restaurant which serves both local and international cuisines for up to 350 Pax at one sitting. A well-equipped gymnasium and a business centre together with open grounds ideal for exhibitions, weddings, cocktails, organisational banquets among others make KICD and ideal venue

for functions. KICD provide services mainly to government institutions as well as private clients. The clients are drawn from diverse socio-economic backgrounds. This institution like KSG was selected for this study due its capacity to cater for large volumes of diverse clients and it's busy throughout the year.

3.3 Research Design

This research used explanatory research design to answer why the phenomenon understudy is going on (Bazeley, 2013). The main aim of explanatory research was to identify any causal links between the factors or variables that pertain to the research problem (Kumar, 2011). This design was preferred since it increases the understanding of the subject areas under research by determining how and why things happen (Newby, 2010). The explanatory Research allows the study to provide the deep insight into a specific subject or phenomenon. This design was appropriate for this study because it provides an explanation of the phenomenon under study. It is also appropriate in clarifying why and how there is a relationship between service provided and customer satisfaction in the institutions studied. This research design was appropriate for this study given that it allowed detailed explanation of the study variables and the connections between without any manipulation of the said variables.

3.4 Target Population

The study targeted customers consuming catering services at the Kenya School of Government and Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD) within a period of one month. The respondents were the clients utilising catering facilities for meetings, workshops and other functions over a period of not less than three days. Preliminary records on customers obtained from KSG and KICD established that about 7000 and 5000 customers use catering services in these institutions in a month respectively. One

month comprises of 20 days since most of the services are offered for five days from Monday to Friday. Consequently, the target population was 12,000 customers.

This study targeted customers from two major Government institutions that provide hospitality and conference services in Nairobi County. The county hosts a number smaller and major government facilities offering hospitality and conference services including the Kenya School of Government (KSG), Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD), Kenya School of Monetary Studies (KSMS), Kenya Utalii Hotel, Kenyatta International Convention Centre, Bomas of Kenya and Cooperative University of Kenya. These are major in terms of capacity to host large number of clients, and have quality facilities that attract government and private clients.

3.5 Sampling Procedure

The sample size determination for the respondents is discussed in sections below.

3.5.1 Sample Size Determination for Customers

The populations under study was too large to be used and therefore the need of sampling. The sample size of customers was determined using Yamane proportionate formula:$n = \frac{N}{1+N(e)^2}$ where "**n**" was the desired sample size, "**N**" was the population size, and "**e**" was the margin of error (Sari & Iskandar, 2012). The study used 0.05(95%) as margin of error. A total of 12,000 customers were targeted in the study. Using the above formula;$n = \frac{12000}{1+12000(0.05)^2}$, the calculation gives a sample size 387 individuals from both institutions' samples. The number of customers from each institution who participated in this study were proportionately determined from 387 individuals representing the computed sample size. Table 3.1 tabulates the customers target population and proportionate sample size.

Table 3.1: Sample size determination

Institution	Target Population	Per cent proportionate	Sample Size
KSG	7000	58.3	226
KICD	5000	41.7	161
Total	**12000**	**100.00**	**387**

Source: Research data (2022)

3.5.2 Sampling Techniques

Purposive sampling was employed to select KSG and KICD as the study site because they have the required information adequate to answer the objectives of the study. KSG is the institution that responsible for training government officers on policy making and implementation. The officers trained have the duty of implementing government policies. KSG is critical body in the delivery of government services and is expected to offer high quality hospitality services that commensurate with its stature as a centre of excellence in East Africa. KICD is a centre of excellence in curriculum development in East Africa. It's a unique institution since it provides hospitality and conference services to both government and private. It was chosen for this study to offer a comparison with KSG to assess the quality of services offered in two government institutions.

Systematic sampling techniques were employed to select the customers who participated in this study. The calculated sampling fraction; Sampling fraction=Actual sample size/Population size (KSG; 7000/226=30 while KICD; 5000 /161=30). This means that for both KSG and KICD were the 30th subject. A list of participants was obtained from the management of the conferences in each institution on a daily basis until the sample size was attained. The list was used to select every 3rd customer. This technique is appropriate since it provided equal chances of each individual to be selected during sampling without bias.

3.6 Data Collection

3.6.1 Data Collection sources and instruments

This study used closed ended structured questionnaires with, Likert type questions to collect primary data. A 7-point SERVQUAL instrument was administered to the customers to be filled before and after the service was rendered. This instrument aimed at measuring the pre and post experiences. The structured questionnaires consisted of closed ended questions to collect quantitative primary data from the respondents. Questionnaires were appropriate for this study because of the ability to cover a large number of participants in a relatively short time and at the same time ensure confidentiality of the respondents. Secondary data was obtained from research reports, journals and survey reports on service delivery

3.6.2 Data Collection Procedure

The researcher sought help of the respective institutions to identify the respondents and brief them on the purpose of the study and administer the questionnaires. The questionnaires were distributed to the customers on the first day of the workshop to allow them complete the section on expected service. The customers were then given time up to the last day of the workshop to complete the questionnaires. The respondents were given ample time to fill the questionnaires. The researcher was assisted by four research assistants who ensured completion of the questionnaires, that they were returned at the end of the workshop and also clarify any questions that may not be well understood. Two research assistants were allocated to each of the institutions owing to the large number of participants.

3.7 Pre-testing

The study instruments were pre-tested at Cooperative College of University of Kenya catering unit which offer similar services to the KSG and KICD. According to Mugenda

and Mugenda (2003), One per cent to ten per cent of the questionnaires are adequate for pre-testing. In this study a 5% of (20) customer questionnaires were used in pre-testing.

3.8 Validity

According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) validity is the degree to which results obtained from the analysis of the data actually represents the phenomenon under study. Veal and Darcy (2014) observe that, validity is the extent to which information collected by the researcher truly reflects the phenomenon being studied. The researcher sought experts' opinion from the supervisors and research assistants to determine face and content validity. Face validity ensured the research instruments collected the intended information to avoid irrelevant data. Content validity ensured the instruments collect data on the subject matter only as per the specific objectives.

3.9 Reliability

Reliability is the extent to which results are consistent over time using the same measuring instruments and can be reproduced under a similar methodology (Joppe, 2012). To ensure reliability of instruments, questionnaires were subjected to pre-testing. The pre-testing results were subjected to Cronbach's Alpha to determine the reliability of the instruments. Cronbach's Alpha reliability coefficient normally ranges between 0 and 1 (Gliem & Gliem, 2003). According to Amin (2005), only Cronbach's alpha reliability index of ≥ 0.7 is acceptable. If reliability coefficient value is equal or greater than 0.7 it will mean the instrument is reliable but if the results are less than 0.7 it will mean the instrument is not reliable. The data from pilot study was subjected to Cronbach Alpha test and results indicated that the instruments had an internal reliability coefficient of 0.74 which points that they were reliable for data collection in the study.

3.10 Data Analysis

Data collected were cleaned, coded and entered into the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software for analysis. Data analysis focused on the study objectives in their order. Descriptive statistics and inferential statistics were used to analyse data. Descriptive statistics were used to generate frequencies, percentages, mean and standard deviation for the numerical data of each variable. On the other hand, inferential statistics used were gap analysis, paired t-test and multiple linear regression.

Gap analysis was computed by subtracting the perception (P) score from expectation (E) score (P-E). Negative Gaps indicates customers were not satisfied while positive Gaps were indicators of customer satisfaction with quality catering service. According to Grimmelikhuijesen et al., (2017) GAP analysis is useful in establishing customer satisfaction because it helps identify service gaps between customer perceptions of a service and their expectations towards the same. The idea is to identify these gaps and reduces them so as to improve on customer satisfaction.

Paired-Samples T-Test were used to compare the mean difference of expectations and experience of each catering service quality dimension- The choice of this test in this study is appropriate as a t-test will help compare customer characteristics like expectation and experiences using means.

Multiple Linear Regression (MLR) tested the influence of the service quality dimensions such as tangibility, responsiveness, empathy, reliability and assurance on customer satisfaction which was the dependent variable. Assumptions of MLR were tested such as linearity using scatter plots, normality using Q-Q plots, multicollinearity using Variance Inflation Factor (VIF), homoscedasticity using scatter plots and autocorrelation using Durbin Watson.

The regression model was set as:

$$y = \beta_0 + \beta_1 x_1 + \beta_2 x_2 + \beta_3 x_3 + \beta_4 x_4 + \beta_5 x_5 + e$$

Where;

y = Dependent variable (customer satisfaction)

β_0 = Constant

β_i = Coefficient to be estimated

X_1 = Tangibility

X_2 = Reliability

X_3 = Responsiveness

X_4 = Assurance

X_5 = Empathy

3.11 Ethical Considerations

Permission was sought from Moi University, National Commission of Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI) and management of KSG and KICD before embarking on data collection. An introductory letter to research participants detailing the purpose of the research was written to each respondent. A willing consent to participate in the study was sought from the participants. A briefing on data collection was done to ensure participants are aware of the expectations of the researcher and the respondents. To ensure confidentiality, the names, personal numbers or any other forms of identification was recorded on the questionnaire and in the final report. All respondents were treated with utmost respect during the process of data collection and through the whole exercise. Finally, the participants were informed prior to the interview that the purpose of the research was purely for academic purposes.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS, PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the study presents the data analysis, discussions and interpretations of the findings. These are organized according to the specific objectives of the study. The findings are presented in charts and tables and their discussions thereof.

4.2 Response Rate

The study had targeted 387 respondents drawn from customers participating in workshop from both KSG and KICD. The returned questionnaires were 380 out of which 370 questionnaires were found complete and fit for analysis representing a response rate of 95.6% which according to Mugenda and Mugenda (2008) is adequate.

4.3 Background Information

This section presents the respondents characteristics such as gender, age, sector, academic qualifications and facility usage.

4.3.1 Respondent characteristics

The respondent's characteristics are presented in table 4.1 below

Table 4.1: Respondent characteristics

Respondent characteristic	Results
Gender	Male (51.6%) Female (48.4%)
Sector	Government sector (65.1%) Private sector (15.4%) County govt (15.1%) NGO (4.3%)
Facility usage	Used the facility more than 3 times (72.4%) Used the facility more than four times (18.6%)
Function attended	Government seminars (73.2%) Private and NGO seminars (5.1%)

Source: Research data (2022)

The results showed that that 51.6% of the respondents were male and 48.4% were female. Further, Majority (80.2%) of the respondents were found to be from government sector. 65.1% were from national government and 15.1% were from the county governments. Those from the private sector were 15.4% while the NGO's only represented 4.3% of the respondents. Also, majority of the respondents (72.4%) have used the facilities not more than three times. Those who have used the facilities for more than four times are just 18.6%. Lastly, majority of the respondents (73.2%) were attending government seminars while 5.1% were attending private sector and NGO seminars.

4.3.2 Age and academic qualifications of the respondents

The age of the respondents was cross tabulated with their academic qualifications and the results presented in table 4.2.

Table 1.2: Age and academic qualification Cross tabulation

Age	Academic qualification					Total
	Secondary	Tertiary	1st Degree	Masters	PhD	
22-25yrs	0	6	0	0	0	6
25-30yrs	0	13	19	13	0	45
31-35yrs	0	11	23	23	0	57
36-40yrs	12	7	20	12	0	51
41-45yrs	0	2	38	29	0	69
Above 45yrs	0	41	9	81	11	142
Total	12	80	109	158	11	370

Source: Research data (2022)

Majority (39%) of the respondents were found to be of 45 years and above. The respondents who had attained age 36 and above represented 71.4%. Results from the

cross tabulation indicates that the academic qualification advances with age given that over 110 master's degree holders and 11 PhD holders are over 41 years of age.

4.4 To Determine the Customer Expectations and Experience of Service Quality Dimensions of Catering Services

4.4.1 Customer expectations and experience of catering service quality dimensions

The study sought to find out the expectations of service quality dimensions of catering from customers using a scale of 1 to 7 where (1-Strongly disagree, 2-Somehow disagree, 3-Disagree, 4-Not sure, 5-Agree, 6 Somehow agree and 7-Strongly agree). The results are presented in table 4.3

Table 4.3: Customer expectations and Experience

		Customer expectations			Experience	
			Mean	S. D		
1	Tangibles	The catering equipment is modern	5.54	1.534	4.44	1.454
2		The dining room is visually appealing	5.65	1.370	4.80	1.000
3		Staff are neat in uniform and well groomed	6.01	1.117	4.79	.998
4		Materials such as menu card, serviettes, table clothes are very appealing	5.76	1.320	4.76	1.091
		Average	**5.74**	**1.335**	**4.69**	**1.135**
5	Reliability	Catering services are timely	6.06	1.008	5.51	.938
6		Staff will show interest to solve customer problems	5.91	.988	5.72	1.035
7		Service are performed right, first time	5.73	1.172	5.98	.854
8		Services are provided at the time it promised to	5.83	1.138	5.99	.946
9		Error-free service will be provided	5.13	1.513	5.70	1.139
		Average	**5.732**	**1.1631638**	**5.78**	**0.982**
10	Assurance	Staff will inform us when service will start	5.74	1.259	4.62	1.146
11		Staff will provide prompt service to us	5.62	1.046	4.69	1.293
12		Staff will be willing to help	5.78	.963	4.66	1.095
13		Staff will not be too busy to respond	5.79	1.088	4.51	1.233
14		Staff will instil confidence in customers	5.78	1.008	4.83	.911
15		Customers will feel safe	6.11	.914	5.92	1.085
		Average	**5.80**	**1.046**	**4.87**	**1.127**
16	Responsiveness	Staff will be consistently courteous	6.00	1.004	5.96	.946
17		Staff will have knowledge to answer questions	5.56	1.285	5.51	1.420
18		Staff will give individualized attention	5.21	1.237	5.68	.997
19		Restaurant has convenient operating hours	5.75	1.033	5.65	1.507
		Average	**5.63**	**1.139**	**5.7**	**1.217**
20	Empathy	Staff will give personal attention	5.41	1.177	5.92	.984
21		Staff will have customers at heart	5.65	1.067	5.70	.892
22		Staff will understand specific needs of customers	5.44	.959	5.87	.977
		Staff will consider special needs of customers	5.78	1.086	5.53	1.250
		Average	**5.57**	**1.072**	**5.755**	**1.025**

Source: Research data (2022)

The findings of the study were that the customer agreed that the tangible dimension of

service expected met their expectations (mean 5.74, SD 1.34). They also agreed that

they expect reliability dimension of service quality to meet their expectations had before services were offered (mean=5.73, SD=1.16). Regarding the assurance dimension of service quality, the respondents also agreed that the services offered in selected government institutions should meet their expectations (mean=5.80, SD=1.04). The study also found out that the customers agreed that the responsiveness of the staff in the selected institutions should meet their expectations (mean=5.63, SD=1.14). Lastly, the study found out that the respondents considered their expectations on empathy dimension of service quality from the selected institutions to meet their expectations (mean=5.57, SD=1.07).

This is supported by Mubiri, (2016) who established that in catering service, customers expect the services rendered to meet their expectations in terms of the staff delivery of the service, appealing and assuring, as well as reliable. Customers must feel needed in a hotel. The staff must offer quality food and drinks as well as individual attention to clients. Hospitality features that contribute to customer satisfaction can be grouped into catering establishment physical facilities and service features (Nunkoo et al., 2020). The physical features may include; spacious well-lit dining hall, conference halls, accommodations facilities, internet among others. Service features may include; a 24-hour room service, free high-speed internet, free laundry for children among others. The quality, adequacy and availability of these hospitality features plays a critical role in making customer satisfied with the services offered. According to Bahadur et al., (2018) welcoming of customers suggestions and provision of quality goods and services comes in handy in meeting their expectations and satisfaction. It also helped in their retention, loyalty and cultivating good strong relationship between customer satisfaction and employees. According to Nunkoo, et al., (2020), checking on

employees' behaviour towards customers and customers' expectations beefs up quality assurance of the service rendered.

4.4.2 Customer Experience of service quality dimensions of catering services

The findings of the study in table 4.4 were that the customers were neutral that the tangible dimension of catering service experienced in selected institution (mean 4.69, SD 1.14). They also agreed that reliability dimension of service quality experienced met the expectations they had before services were offered (mean=5.78, SD=0.98). Regarding the assurance dimension of service quality, the respondents neutral that the services experienced in selected government institutions met their expectations (mean=4.87, SD=1.13). The study also found out that the customers agreed that from their experience, the responsiveness of the staff in the selected institutions met their expectations (mean=5.7, SD=1.21). Lastly, the study found out that the respondents considered their experience on empathy dimension of service quality from the selected institutions to have met their expectation (mean=5.75, SD=1.02).

The findings that reliability, responsiveness and empathy service quality dimensions have brought about customer satisfaction rhymes Ramachandran and Pandian (2016) findings certain characteristics enhance the appeal of a service including its reliability, responsiveness and its tangibility. Gardi et al., (2021) examined the determinants of customer satisfaction and found out that quality of services and products, price, perceived security as well as the environment including the employees have a positive influence on customer satisfaction. Mubiri (2016) similarly observed that when a service offered includes reliability, empathy and responsiveness then a customers' perception of satisfaction becomes much higher. The main concern of the hospitality industry is to meet customer needs and desires in this era of competitive global arena Faraj et al., (2021). Customers always remain with a memory of the experience of a

service rendered to them which may be good, bad or indifferent. This is so since customers always expect high quality service from the service provider. Employees play a very significant role in the provision of goods and services in any business organization and particularly the service industry. This is because the services have unique characteristics that make them very different from tangible goods sector. Tangibility refers to the appearance of physical facilities, equipment, personnel and communication materials that makes the product or service practical and usable by the customer (Flores et al., 2020).

4.5 To Compare Customer Expectation and Experience of Service Quality Dimensions Catering Services in Selected Government Institution in Nairobi Kenya

The study sought to compare the customer expectations and experience in selected government institutions in Nairobi. SERVQUAL model was used to measure the services quality using Gap analysis. The service quality dimensions considered in the SERVQUAL model as the base for calculating service quality were; tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, empathy and assurance. The study used the SERVQUAL model as used by Kottler and Keller, 2016) scale to establish the customer satisfaction through calculating the difference between service expectation and perception before and after the services were delivered. The resulting difference between customer expectations and perceptions experience is the Gap analysis. Flores et al., (2020) also observed that quality of food, environment and service quality do influence customer intentions to refer other customers to a hotel. Having the correct price for quality services can result in customer loyalty and satisfaction.

The study therefore employed use of 22 service quality statements as used by Prentice et al., (2020) in determining satisfaction of service quality before and after rendering

services. The Gap scores were derived from differences in mean scores from perception and expectation of services delivery. Whenever, perception of service received equals or is greater than expectations, a customer is said to be satisfied. A negative difference between perception and expectations shows dissatisfaction with service rendered.

The study thus used calculated mean scores of the 22 statements derived from SERVQUAL service quality dimensions for both perceptions and expectations. The Gap score was then calculated by finding the difference of the perception mean score and expectation means scores (Perception- Expectations). The results are indicated in table 4.4.

Table 4.4: Gap analysis

		Statement	Experience (E1)	Expectations (E)	Gap Score (E1-E)
1		The catering equipment is modern	4.44	5.54	-1.1
2		The dining room is visually appealing	4.80	5.65	-0.85
3	Tangibles	Staff are neat in uniform and well groomed	4.79	6.01	-1.22
4		Materials such as menu card, serviettes, table clothes are very appealing	4.76	5.76	-1
		Average Gap score	**4.69**	**5.74**	**-1.05**
5		Catering services are timely	5.51	6.06	-0.55
6		Staff will show interest to solve customer problems	5.72	5.91	-0.19
7	Reliability	Service are performed right, first time	5.98	5.73	0.25
8		Services are provided at the time it promised to	5.99	5.83	0.16
9		Error-free service will be provided	5.70	5.13	0.57
		Average Gap score	**5.78**	**5.732**	**0.048**
10		Staff will inform us when service will start	4.62	5.74	-0.12
11		Staff will provide prompt service to us	4.69	5.62	-0.93
12		Staff will be willing to help	4.66	5.78	-1.12
13	Assurance	Staff will not be too busy to respond	4.51	5.79	-1.28
14		Staff will instil confidence in customers	4.83	5.78	-0.95
15		Customers will feel safe	5.92	6.11	-0.19
		Average gap score	**5.705**	**5.80**	**-0.93**
16		Staff will be consistently courteous	5.96	6.00	-0.04
17	Responsiveness	Staff will have knowledge to answer questions	5.51	5.56	-0.05
18		Staff will give individualized attention	5.68	5.21	0.47
19		Restaurant has convenient operating hours	5.65	5.75	-0.1
		Average gap score	**5.7**	**5.63**	**0.07**
20		Staff will give personal attention	5.92	5.41	0.51
21		Staff will have customers at heart	5.70	5.65	0.05
22	Empathy	Staff will understand specific needs of customers	5.87	5.44	0.43
		Staff will consider special needs of customers	5.53	5.78	-0.25
		Average gap score	**5.755**	**5.57**	**0.185**

Source: Research data (2022)

Gap mean score=Mean Perception-Mean Expectation

From the Gap analysis on customer satisfaction, the study established varied reactions from the customers. This was shown by negative Gap analysis scores in tangibility (-1.05) and assurance (-0.93). This meant that the customers were not satisfied with tangibility and assurance dimensions of services and products in selected government institutions. These findings agree with the customers recommendations for improvement in figure 4.7 as majority (51.6%) of the customers would want the institution to bring in modern equipment, offer variety of tea items and offer adequate snacks. Frawley, Goh & Law (2019) opined that poor service quality can be associated with lack of continuous improvement of facilities like catering facilities and human resources. Tessera, Hussain and Ahmad (2016) established similar views and agreed that Gap analysis is instrumental in establishing the differences between customers experiences and their perceptions. Ismael et al., (2021) Similarly, observed that customers expect a very high quality of services especially when the price is high and generally expect lowly priced services to be of low quality. Gardi et al., (2021) posited that service quality have a significant positive relationship with customer satisfaction. In addition, Ismail (2016), also posited that knowledge and courtesy of staff and their ability to show confidence and convey trust to hotel customers. This is knowledge with which employees have to inspire trust and confidence in hotel service. It was thus reported that assurance indicates the attitude of the employees, their behaviour, the staff's ability to provide friendly, confidential, courteous and competent services.

Similar findings were also reported by Abdullar et al., (2019) who found that the overall customer's perception of service quality provided fell below expectations where service assurance was not guaranteed. This study also found that high levels of guests' satisfaction were achieved in hotels that to a large extent focusing on assurance and reliability. Similar outcome was found by Flores et al., 2020) on Service Quality in

Hospitality Services. It was similarly established that perceptions of service quality were found to be far lower than that of expectations where assurance of quality of service was not guaranteed.

The Gap analysis score of reliability (0.048), responsiveness (0.07) and empathy (0.185) were positive. The positive scores for reliability, responsiveness and empathy indicated satisfaction of customers with these service quality dimensions in the selected government institutions. The customers recommendations for improvement also fails to mention reliability, responsiveness and empathy as areas the institution needs to improve on indicating their satisfaction with these service quality dimensions. In most government owned institutions as reported by Tessera, Hussain and Ahmad (2016) also agreed that the facilities are not updated to match modern requirements due to bureaucracy and red tape and this leads to customer dissatisfaction no matter how well the service is offered. Quality service delivery plays an important role in motivating customer satisfaction and needs to be cultivated by service providers. Service providers develop services and products that have unique features for the purpose of attracting customers. According to Abdullah (2020) features are characteristics that a product or service provide. Anwar et al., (2021) also observed that in a hotel setting, dining services have a fundamental influence on the perceived service quality. Flores et al., (2020) similarly asserted that quality of food, environment and service quality do influence customer intentions to refer other customers to a hotel. Customer expectations can be derived from events, activities and experiences that the customer thinks will happen (Kotler and Keller, 2016). The outcome of a service or experience is customer satisfaction or dissatisfaction. According to various researches, some of the factors attributed to customer satisfaction include location, value for money, hotel comfort, level of cleanliness and efficiency of service (Nikou, 2020). According to Gardi et al.,

(2021) whose report argues that in order to ensure customers satisfaction, hospitality facilities must endeavor to improve service features that are easily identifiable with customers. Rebranding of some facilities like accommodation rooms, conference facilities, dining rooms and others are done to make establishment unique and competitive. Prentice et al., (2020) study on hospitality customers also observed that customers have their needs according to their status as they also compare quality of services by different providers and their resulting satisfaction from perceive fairness to price and value of the products.

The study further conducted paired t-test between the means of customers experience and customer expectations and the results were presented in table 4.5 below

Table 4.5: Paired Samples Test

	Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
	Mean	Std. Dev	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
				Lower	Upper			
Tangibility Experience - Expectations	-1.04250	0.15671	0.07836	-1.29186	-0.79314	-13.305	3	0.006
Reliability experience - Expectations	0.04800	0.43014	0.19236	-0.48609	0.058209	0.250	4	0.004
Assurance Experience- expectation	-0.93167	0.38540	0.15734	-1.33612	-0.527721	-5.921	5	0.57
Responsiveness Experience - expectation	0.07000	0.26796	0.13398	-0.35638	0.49638	0.522	3	0.0001
Empathy Experience- expectation	0.58209	0.25000	4.00000	0.818500	0.74616	1.049	3	0.001

Source: Research data (2023)

The results from paired t-test indicted that there was significant average difference between customer experience and expectation means p=0.004 (reliability); responsiveness, p=0.0001 and empathy, p=0.001. These results show that the

customers' expectations on reliability, empathy and responsiveness customer service attributes were met. The results however indicated that there was no significant difference between customer experience and expectation on attributes tangibility (p=0.006) and assurance (p=0.57). This indicated that the customers' expectations were not met in terms of the experiences they had on tangibility and assurance service attributes.

H$_{o3}$ (a) Tangibles dimensions of service quality do not significantly influence customer satisfaction in government institutions in Nairobi – Kenya

From the t-test results, the study fails to reject the null hypothesis that tangible dimension of catering service quality in government institution do not significantly influence customer satisfaction.

H$_{o3}$ (b) Reliability dimension of service quality do not significantly influence customer satisfaction in government institutions in Nairobi – Kenya

The study accepts the alternative hypothesis that reliability dimension of catering service quality in government institution significantly influences customer satisfaction in government institutions in Nairobi – Kenya

H$_{o3}$ (c) Assurance dimension of service quality do not significantly influence customer satisfaction in government institutions in Nairobi – Kenya

The study fails to reject the null hypothesis that assurance dimension of catering service quality in government institution do not significantly influence customer satisfaction.

H$_{o3}$ (d) Empathy dimension of service quality do not significantly influence customer satisfaction in government institutions in Nairobi – Kenya

The study accepts the alternative hypothesis that empathy dimension of catering service quality in government institution significantly influences customer satisfaction in government institutions in Nairobi – Kenya.

H$_{o3}$(e) Responsiveness dimension of service quality do not significantly influence customer satisfaction in government institutions in Nairobi – Kenya.

The study accepts the alternative hypothesis that responsiveness dimension of catering service quality in government institution significantly influences customer satisfaction in government institutions in Nairobi – Kenya.

4.6 Suggestions for Improvement

The study also sought to establish what areas the customers would want catering services to be improved in selected government institutions. The most frequently mentioned areas to improve according to the respondents are; provision of adequate snacks, improvement of variety of tea items, provision of more and modern equipment, offering hot and fresh offerings and provision of adequate water in washing areas. Other mentioned areas for improvement includes more furniture, provide background music, avail salt and tooth picks at each table, timely deliveries, train staff, change sitting arrangements, improve customer relations and improve empathy. Tessera, Hussain and Ahmad (2016) who also reported similar findings regarding catering services opined that lack of modern facilities and provision of few varieties of items in the menu in government owned institutions lowers customers' catering service satisfaction. Quality services provide a room of retaining customers which ultimately leads to high customer satisfaction, competitive advantage and high profits which leads to success of the

organisation (Gardi et al., 2021). Gardi et al., (2021) also reported that in order to ensure customer's satisfaction hospitality facilities must endeavor to improve service features that are easily identifiable with customers. Rebranding of some facilities like accommodation rooms, conference facilities, dining rooms and others are done to make establishment unique and competitive.

4.7 Customer Satisfaction

The study sought to establish the how customers were satisfied using a 7-point scale where; (7-Strongly Agree, 6-Somehow Agree, 5-Agree, 4-Not Sure 3-Disagree, 2-Somehow, 1-Strongly Disagree). The results are presented in table 4.6.

Table 4.6: Customer Satisfaction

		Mean	S. D
a)	I will continue to patronize the facility	6.01	1.11
b)	I intend to revisit the facility	5.92	0.923
c)	I will continue consuming the services	6.00	0.883
d)	I will recommend the facility to others	6.19	0.872
e)	I have no complains about the services	5.71	1.2

Source: Research data (2023)

The customers were asked to indicate their level of agreement with the above statements to gauge their satisfaction with catering services. Majority somehow agreed that they will continue to patronize, consume services and recommend the facility. The majority also agreed that they have no complains and would continue re-visiting the facility. These findings that customers are satisfied, have no complaints and will recommend the facility to others are similar to Mubiri, (2016) findings that satisfied customers in a hospitality industry will always refer other clients to the institution.

4.7.1 Level of satisfaction

The customers were asked to rate the level to which they are satisfied with the quality

of catering services offered. The results are presented in figure 4.1

Figure 4.1: Level of customer satisfaction

Source: Research data (2023)

The results indicated that the majority (85.5%) of customers were overall satisfied with

catering services from the selected government institutions.

4.8 To Establish how Customer Satisfaction is Influenced by Service Quality Dimensions of Catering Services in Government Institutions

In order for the study to draw conclusive inference on the influence of service quality

dimensions of catering services on customer satisfaction in selected government

institutions in Kenya, the data was subjected to inferential analysis using multiple linear

regression. This was done through subjecting service quality dimensions (tangibility,

reliability, responsiveness, empathy and assurance) and customer satisfaction to

multiple linear regression to ascertain the relationship that exists. The linear regression

model of the study hypothesized that the SERVQUAL service quality dimensions do

not influence customer satisfaction in selected government institutions. The multiple

linear regression results are presented below

4.8.1 Pre-regression analysis (Assumptions of multiple regression)

4.8.1.1 Normality and linearity

The regression analyses do need all variables to exhibit normal distribution. If the residues aren't skewed, then we conclude the normality assumption is met. The study used Skeweness and Kurtosis. The results are presented in table 4.7.

Table 4.7: Skewness and Kurtosis

Variable	Skewness	Kurtosis
Customer satisfaction	0.516	0.814
Tangibility	1.134	0.762
Reliability	0.958	0.272
Responsiveness	0.625	0.469
Assurance	1.056	1.258
Empathy	0.945	0.765

  Source: Research data (2022)

Findings indicated the skewness and kurtosis values for the study variables. The findings show that the smallest value for skewness is 0.516 (customer satisfaction) while the largest is 1.134 (tangibility). The smallest value for kurtosis is 0.272 (reliability) while the largest is 1.258 (Assurance). The data therefore shows that the data is normal because all the skewness and kurtosis values are between +/-1.5. George and Mallery (2014) posited that the values for asymmetry and kurtosis between -2 and +2 are considered acceptable and indicates normal distribution.

4.8.1.2 Multi-co linearity diagnostic test

This test shows the collinearity statistics and indicates if the predictor variables are highly correlated.

A test interchanging the variables was performed and found to be within acceptable levels with Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) of less than 5. According to Creswell (2014),

a VIF of more than 10 indicate trouble and more than 2.5 raise concern. The results

show the Collinearity Tests results

Table 4.8: Collinearity Tests

Model	Collinearity Statistics	
	Tolerance	**VIF**
Tangibility	.800	1.249
Reliability	.723	1.383
Responsiveness	.762	1.313
Assurance	.783	1.291
Empathy	.765	1.271

Source: Research data (2023)

4.8.1.3 Heteroscedasticity test

The study used Breuch Pagan test to ascertain the assumption of heteroscedasticity in

the regression model. The results are presented below

Table 4.9: Heteroscedasticity test results

Breusch – Pagan / Cook-Weisberg heteroscedasticitytestChi2(1) =2.54 Prob>chi2=0.1061

Source: Research data (2023)

The results showed that the null hypothesis was that the error term was homoscedastic.

The calculated p value for variables fitted values of fragility index indicated 0.1061

which is more than the critical value 0.05, therefore the study concludes that the error

terms were homoscedastic.

Table 4.10: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.935[a]	.874	.862	.234

Source: Research data (2023)
a. Predictors: (Constant), Empathy, Tangibility, Responsiveness, Reliability, Assurance.

The service quality dimensions (empathy, responsiveness, assurance, tangibility and reliability) accounts for 86.2%, Adjusted (R^2 .862) of the change in the dependent variable customer satisfaction.

Table 4.11: Analysis of variance

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	92.162	23	4.007	73.177	.000[b]
Residual	13.306	243	.055		
Total	105.468	266			

Source: Research data (2023)

a) Dependent Variable: level of satisfaction to the quality of services offered
b) Predictors: (Constant), Empathy, Tangibility, Responsiveness, Reliability, Assurance

From the analysis of variance, the F statistic significant value was 0.0001 which indicates that the predictor variables; empathy, tangibility, responsiveness, reliability and assurance do explain the variation in customer satisfaction and that the linear regression model is significant.

Table 4.12: Multiple Regression Coefficients Analysis

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	3.480	.325		10.691	.000
Tangibility	-.029	.017	-.167	-1.730	.006
Reliability	-.039	.018	-.219	-2.129	.004
Assurance	-.049	.022	-.327	-2.264	.057
responsiveness	-.047	.017	.303	2.803	.000
Empathy	-.036	.018	.193	2.058	.001

Source: Research data (2023)

a. Dependent Variable: level of satisfaction to the quality of services offered

From analysis of the regression coefficients, all service quality dimensions other than tangibility and assurance were all statistically significant ($P<0.05$) and thus have

influence on customer satisfaction. The results indicate that responsiveness, reliability and empathy dimension of service quality were found to influence customer satisfaction in selected government institutions in Nairobi. According to the respondents, tangibility (p=0.006) and assurance (p=0.57) as service quality attributes in customer satisfaction was statistically insignificant. These findings mirror the Gap analysis findings that indicated that the customers are not sure that tangibility and assurance dimensions of service quality met their expectations as shown by negative gap scores of -1.05 and -0.93. Gakuria and Miyonga (2017) views regarding catering services also agreed with the current study that government institutions are customer averse and thus don't focus so much on customer's view on their service offerings.

The results show that when responsiveness, reliability and empathy are increased in one unit, customer satisfaction increases. Therefore, customer satisfaction is proportional to responsiveness, reliability and empathy. The tangibility and assurance aspects of services was found to have an insignificant influence to customer satisfaction (P>0.05). This indicates that customer satisfaction goes above what can be seen or touched in a hotel by customers. Similar views were echoed by Peterhans, (2010) who opined that even though hotels do invest in tangible attributes, customer satisfaction goes beyond physical appearances and facilities. Gakuria and Miyonga (2017) further asserts that even if there were modern facilities in a government institution offering catering services, the tangibles are provided according to the institution's procedures and not according to customer's tastes and preferences.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter of the study presents the summary of the findings, conclusions and the recommendations. The summary, conclusions and recommendations of the study are organized according to the specific objectives of the study which were; to determine the difference between customer expectations and experience of service quality dimensions of catering services, to establish the customer expectation and experience of service quality dimensions of catering services and to establish the influence of quality service dimensions of catering services and customer satisfaction in selected government institutions in Kenya

5.2 Summary of the Study's Findings

The findings of the study are summarised according to the specific objectives.

5.2.1 To determine the customer expectations and experience of service quality dimensions of catering services and customer satisfaction in government institutions in Nairobi Kenya

The first objective of the study sought to determine the customer expectations and experiences of service quality dimensions of catering services in selected government institutions in Nairobi. The study established that the customers expect that the service quality dimensions; tangibility, assurance, responsiveness, reliability and empathy to meet their expectations and lead to satisfaction. All these service dimensions scored a mean of above 5 indicating that before consuming catering services, customers expect that service quality dimensions will lead to satisfaction.

The study also sought to establish the customer's experiences in the selected institutions regarding service quality dimensions of catering services. It was established that service quality dimensions of catering services; reliability, responsiveness and empathy met customer expectations as indicated by means of above 5 However, regarding the tangibility and assurance service quality dimensions the customers were not sure that their expectations were met.

5.2.2 To compare customer expectations and experience of service quality dimensions of catering services in government institutions in Nairobi, Kenya

The study sought to compare the customers' experiences (perceptions) and customer's expectations of service quality dimensions of catering services in the selected institutions. It was established using Gap score analysis that service quality dimensions of catering services; reliability, responsiveness and empathy met customer expectations as indicated by positive Gap scores. However, Gap score analysis indicated that the customers were not satisfied with tangibility and assurance dimensions of catering service quality in selected government institutions given that they scored negative Gap scores.

5.2.3 To establish how customer satisfaction is influenced by service quality dimensions of catering services in government institutions

The study sought to find out the influence of service quality dimensions of catering services and customer satisfaction in selected government institutions. This was done using multiple linear regression. The results indicated that the service quality dimensions of catering services; reliability, responsiveness, tangibility, assurance and empathy accounts for 86.2% of change in customer satisfaction. The findings of the study were that reliability, responsiveness and empathy dimensions of service quality had statistically significant (P=0.05) influence on customer satisfaction. Regarding the

influence of tangibility and assurance dimensions of catering service quality, the regression analysis indicated that these two attributes had statistically insignificant ($p>0.05$) influence on customer satisfaction.

5.3 Conclusion

The first objective of the study was to determine the customer expectations and experiences of service quality dimensions of catering services and customer satisfaction in government institutions in Nairobi, Kenya. The study concludes that customers agree that the catering service quality dimensions (tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, empathy and assurance) will meet their expectations and satisfy them. The study further concludes that the customers after experiencing the catering services were not sure that tangibility and assurance dimensions of catering service quality met their expectations even though they agreed that the other attributes met their expectations.

The second objective was to establish the difference between customer expectations and experiences of service quality dimension of catering services and customer satisfaction in government institutions. The study concludes using Gap analysis that customers are satisfied with reliability, responsiveness and empathy dimensions of catering service quality. However, the customers were not satisfied with tangibility dimension (catering equipment are not modern, dining room not appealing, staff's uniform and materials were also found not appealing). Also, they are not satisfied with assurance dimension (the customers did not feel safe, the staff did not instil enough confidence in customers, staff appeared busy to attend customers, staff were not prompt and their willingness to help was wanting).

The third objective of the study was to establish the influence of service quality dimensions of catering services and customer satisfaction in government institutions.

The study concludes that the catering service quality dimensions; responsiveness, reliability and empathy do influence customer satisfaction in selected government institutions in Nairobi Kenya. The study found statistically significant influence of reliability, responsiveness and empathy on catering customer's satisfaction. However, the influence of tangibility and assurance catering service quality on customer satisfaction was found to be insignificant.

5.4 Recommendations for Policy and Practice

From the study findings, the following recommendations were made;

The study found out that the customers were not satisfied by the assurance dimension of the catering services offered, staff's willingness to help, making customers feel safe, not busy for customers, instilling confidence in customers and prompt service. The study thus recommended that the management should institute standard operating procedures that will guide delivery of catering services to customers for their staff's service assurance. This can be achieved through enhanced training of employees to have a consistent and assuring service to customers.

From the Gap analysis, it was also established that customers were not satisfied with the tangibility dimension of catering service in terms of using modern catering equipment, appealing physical facilities and grooming of staff. The study thus recommended that the management should have modern catering and physical facilities in government institutions and also invest in appealing staff uniforms.

The study found out that reliability, responsiveness and empathy service quality dimensions significantly influence customer satisfaction in government owned institutions and recommend that the management should maintain their customer centric approach so as to keep the customers satisfied and ensure that service delivery is

consistent and meets customer expectations which might be underlying issues that are affecting reliability negatively.

5.5 Suggestions for Further Research

The study suggests further research on the following areas;

a) Establish the ability of hospitality staff to offer customer assurance so as to improve customer's satisfaction.

b) How standard operating procedures in the hospitality sector influences customer satisfaction in government institutions

c) Investigate reliability and tangibility since these factors have negative coefficients, it's important to explore if there are specific issues causing dissatisfaction.

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APPENDICES

Appendix I: Introduction Letter

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

My name is Florence Chemtai Komoltochok, a Masters student in School of Tourism, Hospitality and Events Management at Moi University. I am carrying out research on the "**Service Quality Dimensions of Catering Services and Customer Satisfaction in Selected Government Institutions in Nairobi Kenya"**.

You have been selected to take part in the study by filling a questionnaire. Kindly answer all the questions as objectively as possible and be assured that all the information will be given the confidentiality it deserves and anonymity is guaranteed.

I sincerely thank you in advance for your anticipated co-operation to assist me complete this study.

Yours faithfully,

Florence C. Komoltochok

Appendix II: Questionnaires for Customers

SECTION A: DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

1. By use of a **tick [√] or circling** please indicate the following (**Tick one option only**)

   a) Please indicate your gender [1] Female [2] Male

   b) Kindly select your age

   [   ]   22 - 25 years

   [   ]   25 - 30 years

   [   ]   31 - 35 years

   [   ]   36 - 40 years

   [   ]   41 - 45 years

   [   ]   Above 45 years

   c) Please indicate your highest level of academic qualification _____

      Secondary [ ] Tertiary [ ] 1st degree [ ] Masters [ ] PhD [ ]

   d) Which institution do you work for?

   [   ]   Private Sector

   [   ]   Non-Governmental organisations

   [   ]   Government Sector (National government)

   [   ]   Government Sector (County government)

   Any other please specify_____

   e) How many times you have used this facility

   [   ]   First time

   [   ]   Two times

   [   ]   Three times

   [   ]   Four times

Any other please specify_____

2.   What kind of function you are attending?

    [   ]   Banquet

    [   ]   In-service training

    [   ]   Seminar/ training for government courses

    [   ]   Seminar/ training for private/NGO's courses

Any other please specify_____

SECTION B: EXPECTATIONS OF SERVICE QUALITY

Using the scale of **1 to 7** as interpreted below, please indicate **your expectations** of the

catering services delivered before the experience

		PART A: SERVICE EXPECTATIONS: this part (Captures your **expectations** of the service quality **before** you dined in the restaurants) **7-Strongly Agree, 6-Somehow Agree, 5-Agree, 4-Not Sure 3-Disagree, 2-Somehow Disagree, 1-Strongly Disagree**							
1		The catering equipment is modern	7	6	5	4	3	2	1
2	**Tangibles**	The dining room is visually appealing							
3		Staff are neat in uniform and well groomed							
4		Materials such as menu card, serviettes, table clothes are very appealing							
5		Catering services are timely							
6		Staff will show interest to solve customer problems							
7	**Reliability**	Service are performed right, first time							
8		Services are provided at the time it promised to							
9		Error-free service will be provided							
10		Staff will inform us when service will start							
11		Staff will provide prompt service to us							
12	**Assurance**	Staff will be willing to help							
13		Staff will not be too busy to respond							
14		Staff will instil confidence in customers							
15		Customers will feel safe							
16		Staff will be consistently courteous							
17	**Responsiveness**	Staff will have knowledge to answer questions							
18		Staff will give individualized attention							
19		Restaurant has convenient operating hours							
20		Staff will give personal attention							
21	**Empathy**	Staff will have customers at heart							
22		Staff will understand specific needs of customers							
		Staff will consider special needs of customers							

		PART B: SERVICE EXPERIENCE –this part (captures your **perceived (experience)** of the service quality **after** you have dined in the restaurants) **7-Strongly Agree, 6-Somehow Agree, 5-Agree, 4-Not Sure 3-Disagree, 2-Somehow, 1-Strongly Disagree**							
			7	6	5	4	3	2	1
1	**Tangibles**	Modern equipment was used in the restaurant							
2		Physical facilities are very appealing							
3		Staff are neat and well groomed							
4		Materials associated with service were visually appealing							
5	**Reliability**	Staff fulfilled their promise							
6		Hotel shows interest in solving problems							
7		Staff performed the service right the first time							
8		Staff provided services at promised time							
9		Staff provided error-free service							
10	**Assurance**	Staff informed customers exactly when services are to be performed							
11		Staff gave prompt service							
12		Staff were always willing to help customers							
13		Staff were never too busy to respond to customers make it positive							
14		Staff instilled confidence on customers							
15		Customers felt safe during function							
16	**Responsiveness**	Staff are consistently courteous							
17		Staff gave knowledgeable answers to questions posed							
18		Staff give customers individualized attention							
19		Restaurant had convenient working hours							
20	**Empathy**	Staff gave customers personal attention							
21		Staff had customers best interest at heart							
22		Staff understood specific needs of a customer							
		Staff considered special needs of a customer							

3. Please suggest **three areas** you would like the establishment to improve quality of catering services

    i) _____

    ii) _____

    iii) _____

SECTION C: CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

4. Using the table below please indicate your level of agreement with the following statement (**7-Strongly Agree, 6-Somehow Agree, 5-Agree, 4-Not Sure 3-Disagree, 2-Somehow, 1-Strongly Disagree)**

		7	6	5	4	3	2	1
f)	I will continue to patronize the facility							
g)	I intend to revisit the facility							
h)	I will continue consuming the services							
i)	I will recommend the facility to others							
j)	I have no complains about the services							

5. To what level are you satisfied with the quality of catering services offered by this institution

    i) Very much satisfied   [   ]

    ii) Satisfied   [   ]

    iii) Slightly Satisfied   [   ]

    iv) Not sure   [   ]

    v) Slightly Dissatisfied   [   ]

    vi) Not satisfied   [   ]

    vii) Very much not satisfied   [   ]

Appendix III: Plagiarism Report

SR671

ISO 9001:2019 Certified Institution

THESIS WRITING COURSE

PLAGIARISM AWARENESS CERTIFICATE

This certificate is awarded to

FLORENCE CHEMTAI KOMOLTOCHOK

MHM/104/14

In recognition for passing the University's plagiarism

Awareness test for Thesis **entitled** CATERING SERVICE QUALITY DIMENSIONS ON CUSTOMER SATISFACTION IN GOVERNMENT INSTITUTIONS IN NAIROBI, KENYA similarity index of 6% and striving to maintain academic integrity.

Word count:20099
Awarded by

Prof. Anne Syomwene Kisilu
CERM-ESA Project Leader   Date: 11/09//2024